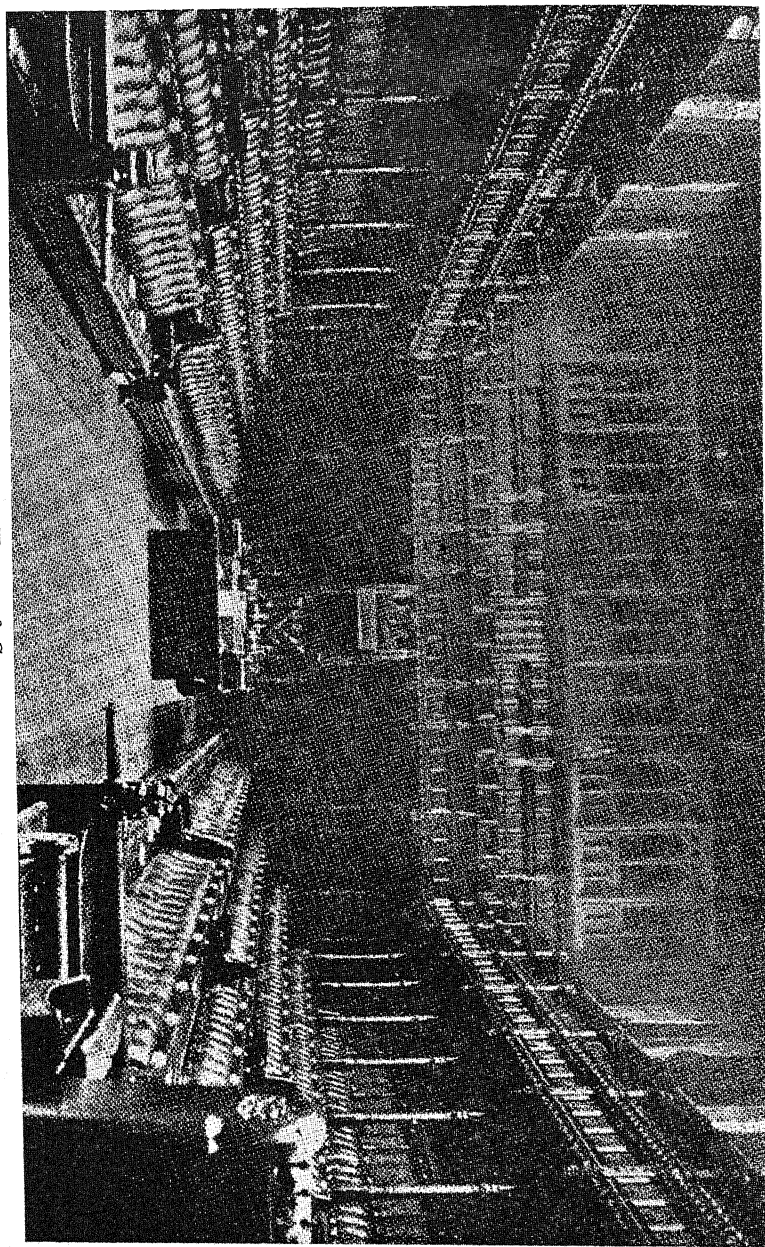


P O L A N D  
in the  
B R I T I S H  
P A R L I A M E N T  
1939-1945

# Documents Series No. 1





House of Commons

# POLAND IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT 1939-1945

Compiled and edited by  
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With the assistance of  
PAULINE C. RAMSEY

## VOLUME I

BRITISH GUARANTEES TO POLAND  
TO  
THE ATLANTIC CHARTER  
(March 1939 — August 1941)



JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI INSTITUTE OF AMERICA  
FOR RESEARCH IN THE MODERN HISTORY OF POLAND  
1946

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## PREFACE

PUBLICATION OF THE stenographic reports of British Parliamentary Debates on the subject of Anglo-Polish relations during the years of 1939 to 1945 unquestionably will provide valuable material arranged in its proper order for all students of history, but particularly for students of the history of Poland, Great Britain and World War II.

There are reasons why the debates in the British Parliament on Anglo-Polish relations are of importance to a wider circle than that embracing only students of history, and it is because of these reasons that the present volume, *Poland in the British Parliament*, should interest the general public.

One reason is: it was the British Parliament, justly called the "Mother of Parliaments," that was the forum where these discussions took place. This institution is probably the most perfectly functioning consultative body in existence, a body that has developed out of democratic processes and is highly conscious of its responsibilities. What it does and says deserves attention.

Another reason for interest in these debates is the subject matter itself. *Poland in the British Parliament* will show how that institution handled certain of the most serious problems of the present day. In making this statement we do not have in mind important questions of general interest that came up during the Debates on Anglo-Polish relations, such as the place of law and force in international life, the value of treaties, or the domination of the continent of Europe. These and other weighty matters naturally were discussed also during other Parliamentary Debates. But, during the discussion of Polish affairs it is apparent that the British Parliament had to

take a more definite position with regard to certain exceedingly important questions than on other occasions. In discussing Poland, there could be no retreat to abstract phraseology. Sometimes, to be sure, there was an attempt to turn away from reality, but more often than not that reality was squarely faced and the concern was with facts rather than with theory.

As the debates on Poland continued there were three subjects of great significance on which the British Parliament had to express its attitude.

The first was the question of freely accepted international obligations. There is no need to stress the importance of this since without respect for such obligations the international world would fall to the level of the jungle and the creation of an international order based on law would be impossible. In the debates on Anglo-Polish relations the British Parliament was not dealing with abstractions when it discussed the matter of keeping its promises. It was dealing with a painful reality that concerned the Parliament itself. Before the eyes of the reader of this volume the problem of keeping a pledge unfolds itself like a theme for a Greek tragedy, beginning with the solemnly given word and evolving through all the stages of rapture, difficulties, temptation and indecision until the climax — the breaking of the oath — is reached. In such circumstances the principle ceases to be an abstraction. It becomes something that drips blood. In coming to grips with an actual and not a theoretical problem, that is, whether or not Great Britain was to keep her pledged word under any circumstances, the British Parliament ran the full gamut — from self-justification to self-accusation — of those convulsions that are shaking the Western world, a world still divided, still uncertain whether to choose a crusade or appeasement, heroism or hedonism, belief or disbelief in its own gods.

A second general problem specifically reflected in these Parliamentary discussions of Anglo-Polish affairs is the ideology of the war just concluded. The Anglo-Polish Alliance was a challenge to the forces bent upon destroying the Western culture of Great Britain and Poland. This Alliance was estab-

lished, on Poland's part at least, in full consciousness of the incalculable sacrifices that she would have to make by refusing to break with the Western democracies. When she made her choice between entering the German orbit or remaining loyal to the Western group Poland certainly was not moved by cold calculation but by the historical tradition of many centuries and the feeling of close spiritual kinship with the West.

Discussion of Poland in the British Parliament often became a discussion of the character of the war: whether it was ideological or utilitarian. This is readily understood, for Poland lay between two states whose ideologies — communism on the one side, and racial superiority on the other side, as exemplified by the Soviet Union and Germany — were diametrically opposed to Western ideology. Therefore, the British attitude toward Poland, despite the unwillingness of many people to admit it, became the true test of ideological victory or defeat for Great Britain herself.

In his volume *War and Peace in Soviet Diplomacy* (p. 290) Professor T. A. Taracuzio has thus defined the ideological conflict of our time:

"If the equality of men both before God and in the exercise of their natural rights is the basis of the non-totalitarian social philosophy, then democracies must be fighting not a physical foe but an abstract principle. In the Third Reich this foe is the National-Socialist claim of racial supremacy, denying the natural privileges of non-Germanic peoples; in the USSR, it is economic equality to be achieved at the price of relinquishment of the innate human right to individual happiness and freedom to decide upon the communal structure. In fighting these, the non-totalitarian states are at war not with Germany and the Germans or with Russia and the Russians in the physical sense of the term; their aim is primarily the destruction of the regimes which are trying forcibly to deny man his inalienable rights."

If we accept this thesis, then we may say that the physical

of the Polish people against the two imperialist governments, German and Russian, each striving in turn for mastery of Poland as a means to the mastery of Eastern Europe, then reaching out from the stronghold of Eastern Europe for mastery of the world.

Thus it has come about that the debates on Poland in the British Parliament have in a very concrete fashion presented to the world the attitude of its leading democratic body towards three basic problems — the problem of international morality, the problem of the ideals for which the war was fought, and the problem of the fruits of victory for the Western democracies.

Today it is difficult to estimate the role of that Parliament. But one thing is certain: that after the crushing of other European parliaments by the machinery of war and the yoke of occupation it remained the one constitutional assembly of a fighting European country where discussion could go on freely, unhampered by the authorities of an occupying power. Within the walls of the British Houses of Parliament, shaken and shattered by German bombs, debates went on not only over the fate of Great Britain but of other States also.

For reasons given above the present volume will be a valuable addition to material explaining the role played by the British Parliament in the solution of the three fundamental problems: whether that role was decisive or whether too much was left in these matters to the British Government, in whose hands has lain and still lies the fate not only of its Polish Ally but of the British Empire itself.

This book is a document covering much ground and including many data. It is a historical document, useful not only to writers of history but particularly to those searching the paths of the future in order to rectify mistakes made during the war.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

FOR THE READER'S information we wish to offer a few remarks relative to the material used and the form of its presentation.

The whole work, which will consist of several volumes, is based on official stenographic reports (Parliamentary Debates) of the sessions of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, covering the years 1939-1945. All the volumes of the Parliamentary Debates of that period have been searched and from each one all the material touching directly or indirectly upon Poland has been taken. Speeches and opinions have in every case been given in full. Most of these speeches called forth comment and it has been our consistent endeavor to include as much of this as necessary to supply in so far as is possible all dates, texts, and remarks in connection with the given speech.

A table of contents and an index will facilitate use of the volume.

In presenting comment it has been difficult to cite in each instance the source from which a text or date was taken. Hence, the chief sources drawn upon, have been separately listed.

The names of members of both the British and the Polish Governments during the period are given, that readers may not be confused when reference is made to individuals.

The date, March 31, 1939, was chosen as the starting point for this examination of Anglo-Polish relations as they appear in the discussions in Parliament, because that is the day on which Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made his historic declaration regarding Great Britain's guarantees to Poland.



This fact, as Winston Churchill in his speech of a few days later (April 3, 1939) rightfully asserted, "constitutes a milestone in our [British] history." From that hour on the chronology of day by day events can be had from a reading of the Debates that took place in Parliament.

The first volume of the series ends with August 14, 1941, the date of the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter, a document that lifted the war's objective to highest level, namely, the assurance of the existence of free, independent, and sovereign nations of the world. The succeeding volumes will include British Parliamentary discussions of Polish affairs in their chronological order up to July 1945, at which time recognition of the constitutional Polish Government was withdrawn.

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GREAT BRITAIN'S MINISTERS  
(Conspectus)

1. CABINET OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN AT THE OUT-  
BREAK OF THE WAR  
(appointed May 28, 1937).

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of  
the House of Commons: RT. HON. NEVILLE CHAMBER-  
LAIN

Chancellor of the Exchequer: RT. HON. SIR JOHN SIMON  
Secretary of State for Home Department: RT. HON. SIR  
SAMUEL HOARE

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: RT. HON. VIS-  
COUNT HALIFAX

Secretary of State for War: RT. HON. LESLIE HORE-  
BELISHA

Secretary of State for Air: RT. HON. SIR H. KINGSLEY  
WOOD

Secretary of State for Colonies: RT. HON. MALCOLM  
JOHN MACDONALD

Lord Chancellor: RT. HON. LORD MAUGHAM

Lord President of the Council: RT. HON. VISCOUNT RUN-  
CIMAN

President of the Board of Trade: RT. HON. OLIVER FRE-  
DERICK GEORGE STANLEY

First Lord of the Admiralty and Leader of the House of  
Lords: RT. HON. THE EARL OF STANHOPE

Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence: ADMIRAL OF  
THE FLEET RT. HON. LORD CHATFIELD

## 2. WAR CABINET OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (from September 3, 1939)

Prime Minister and First Lord of Treasury: RT. HON.  
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

Chancellor of the Exchequer: RT. HON. SIR JOHN SIMON

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: RT. HON. VIS-  
COUNT HALIFAX

Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence: ADMIRAL OF  
THE FLEET RT. HON. LORD CHATFIELD

First Lord of the Admiralty: RT. HON. WINSTON CHUR-  
CHILL

Secretary of State for War: RT. HON. LESLIE HORE-  
BELISHA

Secretary of State for Air: RT. HON. SIR H. KINGSLEY  
WOOD

Lord Privy Seal: RT. HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Minister without Portfolio: RT. HON. LORD HANKEY

## 3. NATIONAL WAR CABINET OF WINSTON CHURCHILL (formed May 11, 1940, reconstructed October 3, 1940).

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, Minister of  
Defence and Leader of the House of Commons: RT.  
HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL

Lord President of the Council: RT. HON. SIR JOHN AN-  
DERSON

Lord Privy Seal and Deputy Leader of the House of Com-  
mons: RT. HON. CLEMENT RICHARD ATTLEE

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the  
House of Lords: RT. HON. VISCOUNT HALIFAX (to Dec.  
23, 1940); RT. HON. ANTHONY EDEN (from December  
23, 1940)

Minister without Portfolio: RT. HON. ARTHUR GREEN-  
WOOD

Minister for Aircraft Production: RT. HON. LORD BEAVER-BROOK

Chancellor of the Exchequer: RT. HON. SIR KINGSLEY WOOD

Minister of Labour and National Service: RT. HON. ERNEST BEVIN

First Lord of the Admiralty: RT. HON. ALBERT VICTOR ALEXANDER

Secretary of State for War: RT. HON. ANTHONY EDEN  
(to December 23, 1940) ;

CAPTAIN RT. HON. HENRY MARGESSON (from December 23, 1940)

Secretary of State for Air: RT. HON. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR

Lord Chancellor: RT. HON. VISCOUNT SIMON

Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security: RT. HON. HERBERT MORRISON

Minister of Information: RT. HON. ALFRED DUFF-COOPER

POLAND'S MINISTERS  
(Conspectus)

1. CABINET OF FELICJAN SLAWOJ-SKLADKOWSKI AT  
THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR  
(Appointed May 16, 1936)

Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs: FELICJAN  
SLAWOJ-SKLADKOWSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs: JOZEF BECK

Minister for War: GEN. TADEUSZ KASPRZYCKI

2. CABINET OF GEN. WLADYSLAW SIKORSKI  
(Appointed in Paris, September 30, 1939)

Prime Minister, Minister of War, and Commander-in-  
Chief: GEN. WLADYSLAW SIKORSKI

Minister without Portfolio: GEN. KAZIMIERZ SOSNKOWSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs: AUGUST ZALESKI

Minister for Finance and Trade: ADAM KOC (until De-  
cember 9, 1939); HENRYK STRASBURGER

Minister of Information: STANISLAW STRONSKI

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Lab. — Labour  
N. Lab. — National Labour  
L. — Liberal  
C. — Conservative  
U. — Unionist Party  
I.L.P. — Independent Labour Party  
L. Nat. — Liberal Nationalist  
Ind. — Independent  
Com. — Communist

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P O L A N D  
in the  
B R I T I S H  
P A R L I A M E N T  
1939-1945



## Part I

### “A Milestone in the History of Great Britain”

MARCH 31, 1939 TO AUGUST 29, 1939.

#### 1. GUARANTEES TO POLAND (MARCH 31, 1939)\*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF *political events leading to the outbreak of the Polish German War on September 1, 1939 shows how steadily and consequentially Hitler continued putting forward new demands, which, if attained, would result in German supremacy in central and eastern Europe. Here are several important dates from this period:*

January 30, 1933 — *Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the German Reich.*

January 13, 1935 — *Plebiscite in the Saar Basin for union with Germany. 477,119 votes for union, 48,637 votes against. The League of Nations approved the results of this plebiscite on March 1, 1935.*

March 16, 1935 — *Hitler inaugurated compulsory military service thereby violating part V of the Versailles*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 2415-2417, 2419.

*Treaty (military, naval and air clauses).*

March 7, 1936 — *Hitler renounced the Locarno Treaty of October 6, 1925 and simultaneously dispatched German troops to the Rhineland, thereby violating articles 42 and 43 of the Versailles Treaty. On the same day Polish Foreign Minister Beck informed the French Ambassador in Warsaw that Poland would adhere strictly to the terms of the Franco-Polish Alliance of 1921. If France considered the seizure of the Rhineland a casus belli, Poland would consider it a casus foederis.*

March 12, 1936 — *The signatory powers of the Locarno Treaty (Belgium, Great Britain, France and Italy) unanimously recognized that the reoccupation of the demilitarized zone was illegal.*

March 19, 1936 — *The Council of the League of Nations "finds that the German Government has committed a breach of article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by causing, on March 7, 1936, military forces to enter and establish themselves in the demilitarized zone referred to in article 42 and the following articles of that Treaty, and in the Treaty of Locarno" and instructed the Secretary General to notify the signatory powers of the Locarno Treaty of this resolution. But these powers did nothing about this resolution, and, consequently, status de facto became status de jure. They preferred to try to restore general confidence through negotiations, as was stated by Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, in the House of Commons on March 26, 1936: "We neither denied the gravity of the breach of the Treaty which had been committed nor the consequences to Europe, but we thought it our imperative duty to seek by negotiation to restore confidence."*

October 14, 1936 — *One of the consequences of Hitler's militarization of the Rhineland was the statement of King Leopold III of Belgium that Belgium would follow a policy exclusively and entirely Belgian. That*

*policy should aim resolutely at placing us outside any dispute of our neighbors." This statement foretold the eventual dissolution of the Belgian-French Alliance.*

November 14, 1936 — *Germany resumed full sovereignty over the German rivers and the Kiel Canal, which had been placed under an international regime under part XII of the Treaty of Versailles and she stated that Germany no longer considered herself bound by any of the international conventions concerned. The signatory powers of the Treaty of Versailles were satisfied merely to say that they regretted Hitler's unilateral action. Mr. Eden, on November 16, 1936, stated in the House of Commons: "In these circumstances it is a matter of regret to His Majesty's Government that at a time when discussions were proceeding and despite assurances given last year, the German Government would once again have abandoned procedure by negotiation in favor of unilateral action."*

March 12, 1938 — *German troops marched into Vienna where Hitler proclaimed the anschluss of Austria to Germany, violating article 80 of the Versailles Treaty. This act of Hitler's was also accepted by the other powers. In the House of Lords, on March 16, 1938, Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax stated that the "British Government were bound to recognize that the Austrian State had been abolished as a national entity." On the same day the German Embassy in Washington took possession of the former Austrian Legation. On April 2, Great Britain informed the German Government that the British Legation in Vienna would become a Consulate General and at the same time asked the German authorities for an exequatur for the new consul in Vienna.*

September 29, 1938 — *The Munich Pact was signed by Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany allowing Germany to occupy the Sudetenland and Czech ter-*

ritories containing more than 50% German population. The British Government thought that the peace of the world had been preserved. Upon his return to London from Munich on September 30, 1938, the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, stated: "We, the German Führer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe. We regard the Agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again. . . I believe it is peace for our time." But the Munich Pact provision for a plebiscite in the Sudetenland was not carried out. The International Commission which, in conformity to article 5 of the Pact, had the task of fixing the territory where the plebiscite was to take place, decided, unanimously, on October 13, 1938, that the plebiscite could be dispensed with. Thus the Sudetenland was incorporated into Germany.

October 25, 1938 — German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop presented to Polish Ambassador Lipski in Berlin the demands that Danzig should be incorporated into the German Reich and that extraterritorial highways should be built through Polish Pomerania. Poland refused. She did suggest that instead of the guarantees and prerogatives of the League of Nations with respect to Danzig there should be substituted a Polish-German agreement on the question of Danzig. This agreement would guarantee the existence of the Free City of Danzig in which the German majority would be insured its own national and cultural life and in which all existing Polish rights would be guaranteed.

December 6, 1938 — A French-German declaration was signed in Paris during the visit of Foreign Minister

*Ribbentrop. According to article 1 of that declaration: "The French Government and the German Government fully share the conviction that pacific neighborly relations between France and Germany constitute one of the essential elements of the consolidation of the situation in Europe and of the preservation of general peace. Consequently both governments will endeavor with all their might to assure the development of the relations between their countries in this direction."*

March 15, 1939 — *The German Army crossed the Czech frontier and Czechoslovakia became a German protectorate.*

March 21, 1939 — *The Germans occupied the Lithuanian city of Memel and annexed it to the German Reich.*

*Noting the trend of these events the English Government made the historic decision to give Poland help if her independence were threatened. This guarantee (unilateral at first) was made public in the following statement of Prime Minister Chamberlain.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition asked me this morning whether I could make a statement as to the European situation. As I said this morning, His Majesty's Government have no official confirmation of the rumors of any projected attack and they must not, therefore, be taken as accepting them as true.

I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty's Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment, by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider that this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means, and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threats of force for the method of negotiation.

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly



clear the position of His Majesty's Government in the meantime before those consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD (Lab.) : May I, in one sentence, transgress in order to say that I am quite sure that this House realizes the potentialities that might arise from the statement which the right hon. Gentleman has made. It may prove to be in its consequences as momentous a statement as has been made in this House for a quarter of a century. It is very difficult with such recent statements before us to say very much, but may I ask the right hon. Gentleman one or two questions which I do not think he has made quite clear in his statement. I would like to ask him whether the statement which he has now read is to be regarded as the first step in a developing policy to deter or restrain aggression, and, if so, will the Government take immediate, active and energetic steps to bring into this arrangement other Powers? Will he especially think of the value of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics together with other Powers, large and small? Will he do so with the wider object of obtaining the maximum amount of co-operation in the defence of peace? Will he consider now the advisability of an immediate conference of those Powers who might be prepared to range themselves on the side of peace as against aggression?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I will try to answer the questions which the right hon. Gentleman has put to me. I think the statement makes it clear that what I have said is intended to cover what I may call an interim period. The Government, as has already been announced, are in consultation with various other Powers, including, of course, the Soviet Government. My

Noble Friend the Foreign Secretary saw the Soviet Ambassador this morning, and had very full discussions with him on the subject. I have no doubt that the principles upon which we are acting are fully understood and appreciated by that Government. The House is aware that we are expecting a visit next week from Colonel Beck, the Foreign Secretary of Poland. There will then be an opportunity of discussing with him the various further measures that may be taken in order, as the right hon. Gentleman has put it, to accumulate the maximum amount of co-operation in any efforts that may be made to put an end to aggression, if aggression were intended, and to substitute for it the more reasonable and orderly method of discussion.

MR. GREENWOOD: There is a point to which the right hon. Gentleman did not refer — the possibilities of a conference. May I put this point, and I want to put it quite frankly, as I think the House will not be without a feeling of responsibility at this moment. Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether in this view he would welcome that maximum co-operation from all Powers, including the U.S.S.R.?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, we should welcome the maximum amount of co-operation. On the question of a conference, in our view it is simply a matter of practical expediency. We have no theoretical views about a conference. If it proved to be the best way we should not hesitate to use it. If we find that there is a more effective way of achieving our object, we might dispense with a conference.

MR. DENMAN (N. Lab.): With regard to the Prime Minister's original statement, may I ask whether there has been time for full consultation with the Dominions?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The Dominions have been kept fully informed.

MR. JOHN MORGAN (Lab.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give us an assurance that there are no ideological impediments between us and the U.S.S.R.?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, I have no hesitation in giving that assurance. . .

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.): May I ask the Prime Mi-

nister, in view of the tension that undoubtedly exists between Poland and Germany at the present moment, whether he is aware of any approach by the German Government to the Polish Government with a view to securing peaceful discussion of their differences?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have not any knowledge at present of any such movement.

## 2. GUARANTEES TO POLAND (APRIL 3, 1939)\*

SIR A. SINCLAIR, *Prime Minister Chamberlain and W. Churchill took part in a further discussion of British guarantees to Poland. During the course of the discussion W. Churchill stated that the declaration of the Prime Minister of March 31 "constitutes a milestone in our history."*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): ...The commitments of this country, whether actual or potential, were stated some time ago by my right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) in a passage which is famous because it so clearly and carefully expressed the facts. The speech was made in the country. That was not so very long ago, and I think that if at that time it had been suggested that we should add to those commitments something affecting a country in the eastern part of Europe, it would, no doubt, have obtained some limited amount of support, but it certainly would not have commanded the approval of the great majority of the country. Indeed, to have departed from our traditional ideas in this respect so far as I did on behalf of His Majesty's Government on Friday constitutes a portent in British policy so momentous that I think it is safe to say it will have a chapter to itself when the history books come to be written.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 2482-2490, 2500-2501, 2564-2573.  
House of Lords. Vol. 112, p. 573-575.

The right hon. Gentleman alluded just now to some misunderstanding of the meaning of that declaration. I confess that I was myself surprised that there should be any misunderstanding, for I thought it was clear and plain for all who run to read. Of course, a declaration of that importance is not concerned with some minor little frontier incident; it is concerned with the big things that may lie behind even a frontier incident. If the independence of the State of Poland should be threatened — and if it were threatened I have no doubt that the Polish people would resist any attempt on it — then the declaration which I made means that France and ourselves would immediately come to her assistance. The right hon. Gentleman quoted a passage from a speech of mine which was made very recently, but perhaps I may be permitted to recall to the House that as long ago as last September I myself gave a warning of the possibility of such a departure as we are now contemplating. On that Tuesday, September 27, at a moment when it hardly seemed possible to cherish any longer the hope that peace might be preserved, it was my duty to broadcast a message. I would like, if I may, to recall to the House one or two sentences that I spoke then:

“I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul. Armed conflict between nations is a nightmare to me; but if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it must be resisted. Under such a domination life for people who believe in liberty would not be worth living.”

At that time I did not myself feel that the events that were taking place in connection with Czechoslovakia necessarily involved such an assumption as that. My opinion at that time was, as it is now, that war as it is waged in these days is such a frightful thing that I could not ask the country to accept new commitments which might involve us in war unless some really vital principle like that which I have just described were at stake. A little later, at the end of the year, hon. Members will recall that the President of the United States in a New Year's message dwelt on the same thought. At the end of that month I alluded to that New Year's message, and said that a challenge

of that kind, a demand to dominate one by one other nations without limits to where that might go, was the only challenge which could endanger the peace of the world, but that if it were made then I felt, like President Roosevelt, that it must be resisted.

There were some at that time, indeed, there were some in September, who believed that the first steps had already been taken towards making that challenge. At that time it was possible to quote to those who held that view the assurances that had been given to me, and not to me only but to the world, that the foreign policy of the German Government was limited, that they had no wish to dominate other races, and that all they wanted was to assimilate Germans living in territory adjacent to their country. We were told that when that was done that was to be the end, and there were to be no more territorial ambitions to be satisfied. Those assurances have now been thrown to the winds. That is the new fact which has completely destroyed confidence and which has forced the British Government to make this great departure of which I gave the first intimation on Friday.

It is true we are told now that there are other reasons for recent events in Czechoslovakia — historical associations, the fear of attack. Well, there may be excellent reasons, but they do not accord with the assurances which were given before. It is inevitable that they should raise doubts as to whether further reasons may not presently be found for further expansion. I am not asserting that today this challenge has been made. No official statement that I know of has ever formulated such ambitions, although there has been plenty of unofficial talk; but the effect of these recent events has penetrated far beyond the limits of the countries concerned, and perhaps far further than was anticipated by those who brought them about. It is no exaggeration to say that public opinion throughout the whole world has been profoundly shocked and alarmed. This country has been united from end to end by the conviction that we must now make our position clear and unmistakable whatever may be the result.

No one can regret more than I do the necessity to have to

speak such words as these. I am no more a man of war today than I was in September. I have no intention, no desire, to treat the great German people otherwise than as I would have our own people treated. I was looking forward with strong hopes to the result of those trade discussions which had already begun in Germany, and which, I thought, might have benefits for both our countries and many other countries besides, but confidence which has been so grievously shaken is not easily restored. We have been obliged, therefore, to consider the situation afresh.

It is not so long ago that I declared my view that this country ought not to be asked to enter into indefinite, unspecified commitments operating under conditions which could not be foreseen. I still hold that view; but here what we are doing is to enter into a specific engagement directed to a certain eventuality, namely, if such an attempt should be made to dominate the world by force. The right hon. Gentleman rightly said that the matter could not end where it stands today. If that policy were the policy of the German Government it is quite clear that Poland would not be the only country which would be endangered, and the policy which has led us to give this assurance to Poland, of course could not be satisfied or carried out if we were to confine ourselves to a single case which, after all, might not be the case in point. These recent happenings have, rightly or wrongly, made every State which lies adjacent to Germany unhappy, anxious, uncertain about Germany's future intentions. If that is all a misunderstanding, if the German Government has never had any such thoughts, well, so much the better. In that case any agreements which may be made to safeguard the independence of these countries will never have to be called upon, and Europe may then gradually simmer down into a state of quietude in which their existence even might be forgotten.

Let me emphasize again, whatever the outcome of the discussions which are now taking place between His Majesty's Government and the Governments of other countries, they contain no threat to Germany so long as Germany will be a good neighbor. I am glad to hear what the right hon. Gentleman

said about encirclement. It is fantastic to suggest that a policy which is a policy of self-defense can be described as encirclement if by that term is meant encirclement for the purpose of some aggressive action.

I do not wish today to attempt to specify what Government we may now, or in the near future, find it desirable to consult with on the situation, but I would make one allusion to the Soviet Union, because I quite appreciate that the Soviet Union is always in the thoughts of hon. Members opposite, and that they are still a little suspicious as to whether those so-called ideological differences may not be dividing us upon what otherwise it would obviously be in the interests of both to do. I do not pretend for one moment that ideological differences do not exist; they remain unchanged. But, as I said on Friday in answer to a question, our point is that whatever may be those ideological differences they do not really count in a question of this kind. What we are concerned with is to preserve our independence, and when I say "our independence" I do not mean only this country's. I mean the independence of all States which may be threatened by aggression in pursuit of such a policy as I have described.

Therefore, we welcome the co-operation of any country, whatever may be its internal system of government, not in aggression but in resistance to aggression. I believe that this nation is now united not only in approval of what we have said but in approval of the aim and purpose that lie behind it. I believe that the whole Empire shares in that approval. The members of the British Empire beyond the seas have hitherto watched our efforts for peace with a fervent hope that they might be successful. All of them had a growing consciousness that we cannot live for ever in that atmosphere of surprise and alarm from which Europe has suffered in recent months. The common business of life cannot be carried on in a state of uncertainty. As far as it is possible for His Majesty's Government to help to restore confidence by plain words, we have done our part. In doing so I am certain that we have expressed the will of this people. I trust that our action, begun but not concluded, will prove to be the turning point not towards war, which wins

nothing, cures nothing, ends nothing, but towards a more wholesome era when reason will take the place of force and threats will make way for cool and well-marshalled arguments. . .

SIR A. SINCLAIR (L.) : It was said last autumn that Czechoslovakia was a composite State which contained large minorities, but so does Poland; 31 per cent. of the population of Poland is non-Polish. It was said that the Czech minorities were discontented; they were not half so discontented as the Ukrainian minorities or the German-Silesian minorities are in Poland; and, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) pointed out in October, the treatment afforded to the German minority in Poland — the same observation applies to the Polish minority in Germany — is not nearly so generous as that which was accorded to the German minority in Czechoslovakia. If Herr Hitler challenges the Prime Minister to apply to the Polish minorities the principle of self-determination, is the Prime Minister going to agree to it, as he agreed at Berchtesgaden, to apply it in its crudest form to the Czech minorities? That phrase "self-determination," which the Prime Minister consented to repeat after Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden, is political dynamite, and it would explode with the same devastating effect in Poland on the German, White-Russian and Ukrainian minorities as it did in Czechoslovakia on the German, Hungarian and Polish minorities.

So we must recognize that Berchtesgaden and Munich represent not an act of justice but a surrender to force — the inescapable consequence of the new foreign policy which the Prime Minister adopted after the resignation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington and which was epitomized in the Prime Minister's speech in this House on February 22 last year when he said that at the last General Election it was still possible to believe in collective security. He added:

"I do not believe it now." — (Official report

February 22, 1938; col. 227, vol. 332)

I have no doubt that the Prime Minister was sincere then — let me say also that I do not think that anyone who has heard



his speech this afternoon can doubt that he is equally sincere today in the new departure of policy which he has announced. Now, once again, it is common ground that the rule of law, buttressed by collective security with provision for peaceful change, is the indispensable foundation of peace and order in Europe.

Therefore, while I welcomed the substance I regretted the form of the Prime Minister's statement on Friday. (March 31) The second paragraph was good but the first paragraph, with its reference to the desirability of negotiation in settling disputes, was unnecessary, and bound to cause misunderstanding. Of course, we all want disputes settled by negotiation, and the whole world knows that all parties in Britain, and this Government in particular, are of the same mind on that point, but the inclusion of those platitudes in the statement was calculated to weaken the effect of the statement in Germany —

MR. HANNAH (C.) : How?

SIR A. SINCLAIR: — and in Poland to revive suspicious memories of Lord Runciman's activities in Czechoslovakia; while commentators of the newspapers which support the Government were swift to declare that this paragraph was intended to exclude Danzig and the Corridor from the scope of the new guarantees. Accordingly, I was not surprised to see in yesterday's newspapers that the Foreign Office had already been compelled to issue an explanation of the Government's statement. It is a great pity that the statement was not made on Friday in quite unambiguous language. Of course, we can all guess how it got there. There can be little doubt that the first paragraph was the contribution to that communique of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Why? Because he declared less than three weeks ago in this House that we should not enter into extensive commitments with the result that the control of our foreign policy would depend upon a whole lot of foreign Powers. So no doubt the first paragraph of the Prime Minister's statement was the price of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's consent to the second paragraph.

For more than seven years the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been the evil genius of British foreign policy. It will

be difficult for a Cabinet of which he remains a member to present that aspect of unity and resolve which the need of inspiring confidence in our friends imperatively demands. Men like the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary, who have already once sabotaged the policy of collective security, ought to make way for men like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) who have consistently advocated it. In the present dangerous situation it is vital that Government pronouncements should convey the impression of proceeding from a resolute and unanimous Cabinet.

Danzig and the Corridor are vital issues for Poland. The Vistula comes out into the sea through the territory of Danzig. The possession of Danzig and the Corridor, without the most solid guarantees of Polish interests, would give Germany a stranglehold on the economic, and therefore on the political, independence of Poland, just as the possession of the Sudetenland gave Germany a stranglehold on Czechoslovakia. I am far from saying that the existing status quo in Danzig must be preserved for all time, but I would say this: if we are entitled to say in this country — as I think we are — that we will not abandon our rights and responsibilities in the Mandated Territories except in return for solid guarantees, not only for the rights of the natives but also for world peace and order, including disarmament as part of a general settlement with Germany, so Poland is fully entitled to take a similar line in respect of questions with which her very existence is bound up, such as Danzig and the Corridor. If we are to convince Herr Hitler of our inflexible determination to resist aggression henceforward, there must be no hedging in the policy of His Majesty's Government and no whittling down of their pronouncements.

Let us be quite clear about this matter. Peace will depend on the ability of His Majesty's Government to convince Herr Hitler that this time they really will be firm. . .

MR. CHURCHILL (C.): . . . Having begun this new policy there can be no turning back. There is no halting place. The arrangement is strictly limited at present to three Powers, but o-

thers are being consulted, and others have dangers and also have resources, and undoubtedly we must measure each case, so far as we can, because our own resources are not unlimited. But undoubtedly the process of building up mutual security on the basis of mutual exertion and effort, large, strong armed strength maintained in all quarters — that process must continue. To stop here with a guarantee to Poland would be to halt in No-man's Land under fire of both trench lines and without the shelter of either. That is why it seems to me that announcement of the Prime Minister on Friday, which is explained and emphasized by his statement today, constitutes a milestone in our history. We must go forward now until a conclusion is reached. Having begun to create a Grand Alliance against aggression, we cannot afford to fail. We shall be in mortal danger if we fail. We shall be marked down and isolated if we fail. It has become a matter of life or death. The policy now proclaimed must be carried to success — to lasting success — if war is to be averted, and if British safety is to be secured.

It is for this reason that I thank His Majesty's Government for the prompt steps that were taken on Saturday (April 1) to repudiate officially the attempts which were made in certain quarters to whittle away the guarantee given to Poland. There was a sinister passage in the "Times" leading article\* on Saturday, similar to that which foreshadowed the ruin of Czechoslovakia, which sought to explain that there was no guarantee for the integrity of Poland, but only for its independence. But surely the position of the French and British Governments is perfectly clear. We are not concerned at this moment with particular rights or places, but to resist by force of arms further acts of violence, of pressure or of intrigue. Moreover, this is not the time for negotiation. After the crime and treachery committed against Czechoslovakia, our first duty is to establish respect for law and public faith in Europe...

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\* London Times, April 1, 1939.

"A stand for ordered diplomacy".

...."The new obligation which this country yesterday assumed does not bind Great Britain to defend every inch of the present frontiers of Poland. The key word in the declaration is not integrity but "independence". The independence of every negotiating state is what matters....".

MR. PRICE (Lab.): ...In regard to the Polish Corridor, that lifeline of Poland, I feel very strongly that here is an issue on which we must take a very firm stand. No one wishes to injure Germany economically, but the Corridor is an economic lifeline to Poland which it is not to Germany. The economic connection between East Prussia and the rest of Germany are not so vital to Germany as the outlet to the sea via the Corridor is to Poland. In this matter I feel strongly that we must bring in Russia to help settle this crisis in the East of Europe. I know the fears of Poland, I know the traditional fear of the Cossack knout and of the terrible repression that went on in the time of Nicholas I, Emperor of Russia, right up to the time when Poland obtained its freedom at the end of the last War. I hope that the Prime Minister will try to allay the fears of Poland. I think this is a role which he might well try and see if he cannot adopt. I am afraid that his tradition of cold hostility towards Russia in the past will make it more difficult, but I hope still he will try.

I remember very well having an interview with a well-known Polish leader in the second year of the World War, M. Roman Dmowski, who was leader of the National Democratic party in Poland. We could hear the thunder of the German guns 50 miles away from Warsaw, as the enemy were advancing further and further East and the Russian armies were slowly going back. I remember in the interview I had with him he said to me, "We are fighting along with Russia today because we do not really fear Russia; we know that we are strong enough to get and maintain our independence. We do not know that about Germany. We are resisting Germany today because we fear her." I believe that all far-sighted Poles really believe that. I know there is a tradition of friendliness towards Germany which was particularly noticeable in the policy of Marshal Piłsudski when the Poles invaded Russia in 1920 and attempted to seize the Ukraine.\* But in spite of these two tendencies in

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\*Poland did not want to "seize the Ukraine," as stated by Mr. Price. According to the political agreement made by the Polish Government with the Government of the independent Republic of the Ukraine (Ataman Petlura) in Warsaw on April 25, 1920, the Polish Army would help to

Polish politics I maintain that the Polish fear of Germany is more dominant than the fear of Russia, because of the reasons that M. Dmowski gave me in that fateful hour. Therefore, I hope that the Prime Minister will do his best to make it possible for Russia to come into any system of mutual defense which may be organized in Eastern Europe to maintain the position there...

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : ...But we desire to emphasize that, in our view, the Government must go much further and much faster, if the purposes which they proclaim to be theirs are to be fulfilled. They must go further, I suggest, in two respects. In the first place, all guarantees of mutual aid should be reciprocal. If we guarantee that we will come with all our forces to the aid of Poland in certain events, equally Poland should guarantee that she will do the same for us, and if I know anything of the character of the Polish people, their spokesmen will be only too glad to make the guarantee reciprocal, for, if I judge the Polish people aright, they are a proud people who do not desire to receive from others more than they give in return. In the second place, not only should all guarantees be reciprocal, but other States should be brought into the arrangement. The arrangement should be greatly widened so as to include not only Britain, France and Poland but other States, both large and small as well. It may be said that, juridically speaking, in terms of existing treaties and engagements, this new departure of the Government adds little if anything to the previous situation, because already there is a Franco-Polish alliance, mutual and bilateral,\* by which each undertakes to aid the other if at-

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organize the independent Ukrainian State. In fulfillment of this aim the Polish Army would withdraw from the Ukraine. In this agreement the Ukrainian Government renounced all claims to Eastern Galicia west of Zbrucz and to that part of Wolhynia, situated on the west of Horyn. At the same time Poland renounced claims to the former Polish territory situated to the east of this line.

The frontier between Poland and the Ukraine, fixed in the treaty with Petlura on April 25, 1920 corresponded very nearly to the southern part of the frontier stipulated in the Riga Treaty between Poland and Soviet Russia, concluded one year later (March 18, 1921).

\* The Franco-Polish Alliance was signed in Paris on February 19, 1921; the Franco-Polish Military Convention was concluded on February 19, 1921.

tacked, and on top of that there is the British guarantee to France in return for a guarantee from France to Britain. That was all prior to this last Government initiative.

Therefore, I say that juridically speaking and in terms of treaties and engagements, the Government up to now have practically added nothing to what existed before. They have, however, made it emphatic, brought it out into the light of day and emphasized it, and that is right. It is right, in my view, because there was evidence — evidence which came not only to the Government but to others, some of which came to some of my hon. Friends by other routes — that there has been in recent days, grave, immediate and pressing danger that Herr Hitler, intoxicated by earlier successes, might “try it on” with Poland. There was, therefore, urgent and immediate need for something new, firm and emphatic to be said. After Czechoslovakia, Poland is next on the list. I am told by one who has recently returned from Prague, that the German soldiers — sharply distinguished from the “toughs” of the S.S. and S.A. — are behaving themselves with decency in Prague, but that in every tavern frequented by them they are saying to the Czechs, “We shall not be here long; we shall soon be going on — going on to Poland.” That is all over Prague. I have it from a good source. . .

. . . Herr von Ribbentrop was so elated by his success in Prague, that he persuaded Herr Hitler to try it again in Memel, and he succeeded there again.

Therefore after this long run of easy victories and after the natural intoxication following upon it in the mind of the ruler of Germany, it was natural that we should ask last week: “Who knows how long before that same threat comes, to bomb Warsaw this time, unless certain intolerable demands are accepted by the Poles? How long before the same threats are made to Paris or London?” The Government have been somewhat slow in their reaction. It is nearly three weeks since Herr Hitler summoned the Czech President to Berlin and threatened to bomb Prague next morning unless the Czech President a-

greed to the invasion and enslavement of his country and its occupation, not only by the German military forces but also by the Gestapo. In the interval, the Government have procrastinated. For several days they appeared to do nothing. Then the Soviet proposal for a conference was rejected as premature. The Government then put forward their proposal for a four-Power declaration, but as we learned from the Press, that declaration was to be purely consultative. It contained no clear-cut proposals for mutual aid in the event of aggression. I am not surprised that the Poles, next in the line of fire, rejected it. It was not unnatural for them to say: "It is good of you to promise that, if Herr Hitler bombs Warsaw, you will invite us into consultation, but it would be better to promise us something more substantial." I am not surprised that the Poles rejected that four-Power declaration.

I had the pleasure last Thursday of a conversation with Mr. Jan Stanczyk, the Polish miners' leader. He is a member of the executive of the International Federation of Trade Unions and is a tough man, as miners are, in Poland no less than in this country. I was interested to learn from him at first hand the attitude of the Polish workers towards the crisis. I was prepared to hear that the working-class movement of Poland have a number of complaints within the sphere of their internal politics, but with those I am not now concerned. What I am concerned to say is that the Polish Socialist movement, the trade union movement and the Peasant party, who represent between them a substantial majority of the population, are rallying unitedly to the defense of their country in the face of this German threat. Exiles are returning, Mr. Witos, the well-known peasant leader, has returned, and others are returning. I was deeply moved by my conversation with this Polish miners' leader, and at what he told me about the determination of the Polish people, including those for whom he was particularly entitled to speak, to resist with all their courage and resolution a German attack, even if they were left completely alone and unbefriended. He told a moving story of a proud and brave people rallying to the defense of their country.

## HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, on March 31 the Prime Minister, in another place, made a statement concerning the attitude which His Majesty's Government would adopt in face of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces. The Prime Minister, as your Lordships will have observed, was authorized by the French Government to declare that in this matter their position was identical with that of His Majesty's Government. I am glad to say that our contact with the French Government throughout these anxious times has been very close. Our two Governments have found themselves at one on all points, and His Majesty's Government have constantly been able to count upon the ready and whole-hearted co-operation of the French Government.

My right honorable friend's statement has received wide publicity, and I will not, unless that is your Lordships' desire, read it again now. But I may, perhaps, be permitted to make some observations on the circumstances in which that statement came to be made, and on its scope and purpose. After the speech of Herr Hitler on January 30, it seemed possible to hope that nothing would occur to shake confidence in Europe, and that we might have embarked upon a period during which a sense of security might gradually have been established. His Majesty's Government were anxious to co-operate to that end, and felt that they might be able to make some useful contribution in the economic sphere. With that in mind the President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade had accepted an invitation to visit Berlin, in order to assist certain trade discussions that were due to take place in Germany between representatives of British and German industry. There supervened the German military occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, the circumstances of which will be within your Lordships' recollection.

It is not necessary for me to stress the apprehensions to which this action gave rise. The events of last year, in spite



of the anxiety that they aroused, could, nevertheless, be explained as part of the project, of which Herr Hitler had made no secret, of incorporating in the Reich contiguous German populations. The incorporation in the Reich of nearly 8,000,000 Czechs was, however, a clear departure from the racial principle which Herr Hitler himself had hitherto proclaimed. Nor was it, in consequence, unnatural that in the light of such departure other countries bordering on Germany should feel that their independence might equally be in jeopardy.

It seemed, accordingly, to His Majesty's Government, that it was important to take steps to re-establish some measure of confidence in Europe, and His Majesty's Government have therefore been in communication with certain other Governments with a view to considering by what means the obligations of international engagements might be reinforced and further recourse to force, or threat of force, for effecting international settlements prevented. For it is plain that no confidence can exist where there is no assurance that undertakings and understandings will be scrupulously adhered to, and that where international disputes arise honest effort will be made to resolve them by way of free discussion. These consultations are still proceeding, and I am not now in a position to make any final statement in regard to them. I might, however, say at once that His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the importance of the attitude of the Soviet Government, and attach value to good relations with them. We are bound, however, to have regard to the fact that the relations of some States with Russia are complicated by particular conditions, though I can assure your Lordships that, so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, these difficulties do not exist. Your Lordships will be aware that Colonel Beck, the Foreign Minister of Poland, is arriving in this country today and I look forward to the opportunity of frank discussion with him of many problems which are of common interest to our two countries.

It was while His Majesty's Government were examining this situation and considering how best they might play their part in the promotion of the peaceful and orderly conduct of in-

ternational affairs, that certain circumstances seemed to suggest the possibility of dangerous developments in the relations between Germany and Poland. It was not, however, possible for His Majesty's Government to form any sure or precise forecast of events, and as the Prime Minister stated in another place on Friday last, in the absence of official confirmation of the reports, on which these anxieties were partly based. His Majesty's Government were not to be taken as accepting them as true. His Majesty's Government nevertheless decided that no time should be lost in taking action to stabilize the situation, and accordingly, in advance of the conclusion of a more comprehensive understanding, they thought it right to make it quite plain what, in the interim, their position would be in the event of Poland finding herself confronted with the danger which they had some reason to apprehend. Those, My Lords, are the circumstances in which His Majesty's Government felt constrained to make that declaration of policy.

I may perhaps be permitted to make this further comment. The action of His Majesty's Government is represented in certain quarters as designed to "encircle" Germany. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is the case that a strong Germany is set in the midst of Europe and if her neighbors feel apprehensions as to her intentions, and tend to take common action in self-defense, that result flows from instinctive reactions and is certainly not the creation of any outside suggestion. And if it be claimed in Germany that these fears spring only from misunderstanding of the German Government's intentions, and from excessive readiness in whatever quarter to believe the worst of German policy, I must observe that, while in all quarters immediate relief would be brought by the conviction that this was indeed so, the neighboring States can at present hardly be expected to ignore altogether the object lessons of the past. Our pledge to Poland marks a new and momentous departure in British policy. We have undertaken this commitment, not in any spirit of hostility to any country but in the hope and belief that, by doing so, we might strengthen the cause of European stability and peace.

### 3. DANZIG (APRIL 3, 1939) \*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister the present position at Danzig; and what reports have recently been sent to the League of Nations from the High Commissioner.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The question of Danzig will, no doubt, come up in the course of discussions with the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who arrives in London today. In these circumstances I feel sure that hon. Members will agree that a statement at this moment would be inappropriate. His Majesty's Government have not so far received from the Secretary-General of the League of Nations any fresh report from the High Commissioner on the position at Danzig.

MR. MANDER: Is it not the case that no change could take place in the status of Danzig without the consent of the League of Nations?

MR. BUTLER: I should require notice of that question.

MR. MANDER: Is it not a perfectly obvious question? The answer is clear.

MR. BOOTHBY (C.) : Could my right hon. Friend give an assurance that there is no truth in the suggestion contained in a leading article of the "Times" on Saturday that the undertaking of the British Government does not cover the existing frontier?

MR. BUTLER: The official statement issued by the Foreign Office may be taken as giving the official view.

MR. HENDERSON (Lab.) : Is it not a fact that the present constitution operating in Danzig has been guaranteed by the League?

\* House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 2425-2426.

MR. BUTLER: I am not prepared to make a statement to-day. If the hon. and learned Member puts down a specific question, I will give him a specific answer.

MR. BELLENGER (Lab.): Is it not the fact that the League High Commissioner has been absent from his post in Danzig for some time past; and is it intended that he shall remain away from Danzig permanently?

MR. BUTLER: All that I can say is that the League High Commissioner is at present at Geneva.

MR. MANDER: Can the right. hon. Gentleman give an assurance, at any rate, that the Government are not contemplating any bilateral arrangement for the exclusion of the League with regard to Danzig?

#### 4. TALKS WITH RUSSIA (APRIL 3, 1939)\*

MR. PRICE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether it is proposed to initiate naval and military staff conversations between this country and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics?

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the right. hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood) on March 22, to which I have nothing to add.

MR. PRICE: Can the Prime Minister say whether the sensitiveness of the Polish Government constitutes a difficulty in initiating the conversation indicated in my question?

THE PRIME MINISTER: No, Sir. I could not attempt to answer that question.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD (Lab.): May I ask whether the question of staff talks with Russia is one of the matters which will be raised with Colonel Beck?

THE PRIME MINISTER: It does not sound like a matter to be raised with Colonel Beck.

\*House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 2426-2427.

## 5. GREAT BRITAIN'S GUARANTEES TO POLAND BECOME RECIPROCAL (APRIL 6, 1935)\*

POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER *Joseph Beck* arrived in London on April 3, 1939 to continue talks on the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance which was under discussion. At this time Mr. Beck put forward the principle of reciprocity as the basis of this agreement. Thus the temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government became permanent and reciprocal.

On April 6, 1939 the following official communiqué was issued:

*"The conversations with M. Beck have covered a wide field and shown that the two Governments are in complete agreement upon certain general principles.*

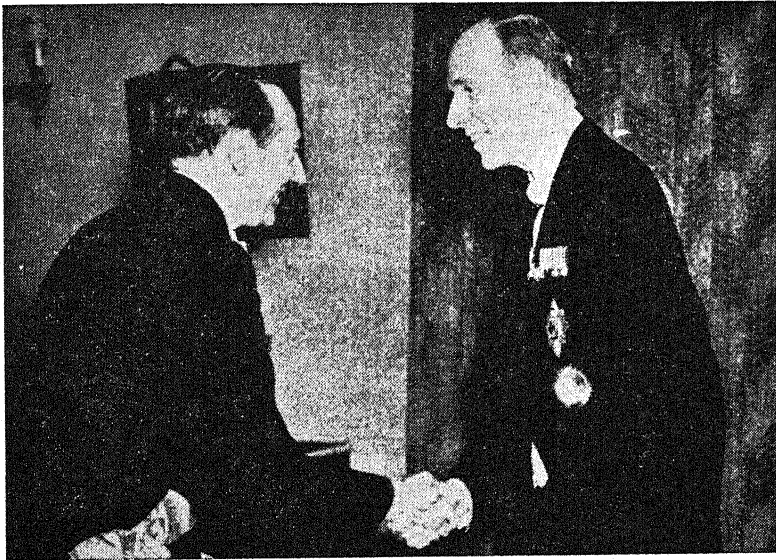
*It was agreed that the two countries were prepared to enter into an agreement of permanent and reciprocal character to replace the present temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government. Pending the completion of the permanent agreement, M. Beck gave His Majesty's Government an assurance that the Polish Government would consider themselves under an obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.*

*Like the temporary assurance, the permanent agreement would not be directed against any other country, but would be designed to assure Great Britain and Poland of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or*

\* House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 2996-2999.

*indirect, to the independence of either. It was recognized that certain matters, including a more precise definition of the various ways in which the necessity for such assistance might arise, would require further examination before the permanent agreement could be completed.*

*It was understood that the arrangements above mentioned should not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace."*



Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance.  
Polish Foreign Minister J. Beck (left) and British Foreign Secretary  
Viscount Halifax (right). London, April, 1939

MR. GREENWOOD (Lab.): (by Private Notice) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make on the international situation, with special reference to the conversations now proceeding with the Polish Foreign Minister and to the recent visit of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Overseas Trade to foreign capitals.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Sir, I can give the House the

following account of the conversations with the Polish Foreign Minister. The account has been framed jointly by M. Beck on behalf of the Polish Government and the Foreign Secretary and myself on behalf of His Majesty's Government. The conversations with M. Beck have covered a wide field and shown that the two Governments are in complete agreement upon certain general principles.

It was agreed that the two countries were prepared to enter into an agreement of a permanent and reciprocal character to replace the present temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government. Pending the completion of the permanent agreement, M. Beck gave His Majesty's Government an assurance that the Polish Government would consider themselves under an obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.

Like the temporary assurance, the permanent agreement would not be directed against any other country but would be designed to assure Great Britain and Poland of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either. It was recognized that certain matters, including a more precise definition of the various ways in which the necessity for such assistance might arise, would require further examination before the permanent agreement could be completed.

It was understood that the arrangements above mentioned should not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace.

With regard to the journey of my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Department for Overseas Trade, he has visited Warsaw, Moscow, Helsingfors and Stockholm. At Warsaw he was able to clear up a number of difficulties which had arisen in the working of the trade agreement with Poland and to discuss with the Ministers concerned the development of Polish industrial equipment. At Moscow my right hon. Friend discussed the general economic relations between our two

countries and was able to obtain the consent of the Soviet Government for the opening in London of negotiations for a new agreement. As the result of conversations at Helsingfors and Stockholm it was agreed that deputations of industrialists should be sent at an early date to London with a view to devising practical methods of increasing our exports to Finland and Sweden.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of His Majesty's Government my appreciation of the hospitality which was extended to my right hon. Friend's delegation and the helpful way in which the Governments concerned co-operated in making this tour a success.

MR. GREENWOOD: May I ask the Prime Minister whether, on completion of the discussions with Colonel Beck, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to use what influence they have to get similar reciprocal arrangements between the French and the Polish Governments; and on the completion of this Agreement does the right hon. Gentleman then propose to proceed swiftly to that wider basis of association which on this side of the House we regard as essential and fundamental?

THE PRIME MINISTER: In regard to the first question, I think the arrangements already existing between Poland and France are practically similar to those which are contemplated between the Polish and British Governments. With regard to the second supplementary question, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to proceed with the consultations and communications which have already been begun with other Governments.

MR. GREENWOOD: With reference to the Trade Agreement part of the answer, I assume that the missions which are coming over here will be coming here pretty quickly, and the House will have an early opportunity of understanding the course of those discussions?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I could not at the moment say exactly when they may be expected to come over, but the House will be kept fully informed.

MR. BENN (Lab.): Has it been decided what does constitute a threat to Polish independence?



THE PRIME MINISTER: No, Sir. As I said in the statement I made, that will be the subject of further discussion between the representatives of the Polish Government and ourselves.

SIR P. HARRIS (L.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that at an early date staff conversations will be initiated with Poland in which France can take part; and, further will he assure the House that during these discussions friendly contact is kept with Russia?

THE PRIME MINISTER: With regard to the first part of the question, I am not in a position to give an assurance of that specific character, but I think the hon. Baronet may rest assured that when this Agreement is completed, or while this Agreement is being completed, we shall take all the steps that seem to us necessary to make it effective. As regards the other question, my Noble Friend is keeping in close touch with the Soviet Ambassador.

MR. BOOTHBY (C.): Could the right hon. Gentleman tell us with what other Governments consultations are taking place?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think that might be misleading, because although we have begun consultations with other Governments it does not follow that that is the end. There are a number of Governments we wish to consult.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): May we be assured that the Foreign Secretary will be in contact with the Soviet Government during the Easter holidays, these 10 days, which may be very dangerous days?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I am sure that my Noble Friend intends to keep in close touch with the Soviet Ambassador, but I am not going to tie him down by saying that he is going to see him every day.

MR. ELLIS SMITH (Lab.): Are the United States Government being kept fully informed of these consultations?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Sir.

## 6. EASTERN GALICIA (APRIL 6, 1939)\*

**B**EFORE THE WAR there were 3,200,000 (10.1 per cent of the population of Poland) Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia. Of the three voievodships of Eastern Galicia, the Ukrainians were a majority only in the voievodship of Stanislawow (66 per cent). In the two others, however, they were a minority: Lwów (34.1 per cent) and Tarnopol (45.5 per cent).

In 1937-38, there were 5,648 primary schools in Poland where all instruction was in the Ukrainian language or where the Ukrainian language was taught. These schools were attended by 539,262 children. There were also about 7,000 pupils who attended exclusively Ukrainian secondary schools. 125 Ukrainian periodicals were published in Poland.

The Ukrainians in Poland had their own cooperatives, which were developing rapidly (in 1924 there were 926, and in 1936 there were 3,272). They also had their own unions, banks, and cultural organizations. In 1938 they had 18 deputies and senators in the Polish Parliament (Seym); one of the vice-presidents of the Seym was a Ukrainian.

MR. PRICE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the conditions under which Eastern Galicia was handed over to Poland, such conditions including autonomy within the Polish State, he will, in the course of his conversations, draw the attention of Colonel Beck to the favorable effect on political stability in Central Europe of a grant of a reasonable measure of autonomy in Eastern Galicia, in view of the menace of German imperialism.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): My Noble Friend does not think that the present mo-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 345, p. 3032-3033.

ment is suitable for raising this question.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER FLETCHER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will represent to Colonel Beck that His Majesty's Government has always shown interest in the claims to reasonable minority treatment of the Ukrainians of East Galicia; is well aware of the opportunities offered to German propaganda by the existence of these claims; and considers that the closer relations now established with Poland would be strengthened by any steps taken to meet these claims in a friendly spirit.

MR. BUTLER: My Noble Friend does not think that the present moment is suitable for raising this question.

## 7. WHO IS TO DECIDE WHAT CONSTITUTES A THREAT TO POLISH INDEPENDENCE?

(APRIL 6, 1939)\*

VISCOUNT CECIL OF CHELWOOD asked whether in the policy announced by the Prime Minister on March 31, by the question whether any action clearly threatens the Polish independence is to be determined by Poland or by His Majesty's Government.

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (THE EARL OF PLYMOUTH): It is obvious that unless Poland herself considered her independence in danger it would not be for any other country to assert a different view. Where issues of so grave a character are concerned, it would no doubt be found that the Polish Government would keep His Majesty's Government fully informed of all developments, but it is unlikely that any difference of opinion would arise since the policy of the two Governments — namely, resistance to domination by force — is identical.

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\* House of Lords. v. 112, p. 601.

## 8. GREAT BRITAIN'S GUARANTEES TO POLAND. TALKS WITH RUSSIA. (APRIL 13, 1939)\*

*S*IMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE decision of the British Government to give guarantees to Poland, England and France began to conduct diplomatic action for the purpose of securing independence for other countries in Eastern Europe.

*On April 7, 1939, Italy occupied Albania.*

*On April 13, 1939, England and France gave unilateral guarantees to Greece and Rumania.*

*At the same time, England, France and Soviet Russia were conducting discussions to arrange for joint action in the case of German aggression. These discussions were based on the words of Stalin from his speech on Russia's foreign policy, on March 10, 1939: "We support those peoples who have become the victims of aggression in their fight for independence."*

*Foreign Commissar Litvinoff resigned his post on May 3, 1939 and was succeeded by Vyacheslaw Molotov, president of the Council of Peoples Commissars.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : . . I, therefore, take this opportunity of saying on their behalf that His Majesty's Government attach the greatest importance to the avoidance of disturbance by force or threats of force of the status quo in the Mediterranean and the Balkan Peninsula. Consequently, they have come to the conclusion that, in the event of any action being taken which clearly threatened the independence of Greece or Rumania, and which the Greek or Rumanian Government respectively considered it vital to resist with their

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 346, p. 13, 59-61, 105-106, 113-114, 129-130, 137-138.

national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Greek or Rumanian Government, as the case might be, all the support in their power. We are communicating this declaration to the Governments directly concerned and to the others, especially Turkey, whose close relations with the Greek Government are known. I understand that the French Government are making a similar declaration this afternoon. I need not add that the Dominion Governments, as always, are being continuously informed of all developments.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD (Lab.) : . . . We have taken on a very grave risk in saying that in any circumstances we will go to the support of Poland, and now of these other countries. That alone does not save the situation in the least. Obviously, to anyone who reads the German Press, it has resulted in the concentration of German venom against this country. We are in greater danger from Germany than we were before we made that arrangement with Poland. The difference between the bilateral agreement we have come to and collective security must be understood if we are to persuade the Government to drop bilateral security and get real security. In the case of Poland, the Government, after having given their guarantee, did manage to persuade the Polish Government — I do not know at what price — also to guarantee us. It is just as vital for us that we should get Polish support if we are attacked as it is for Poland that we should support her if she is attacked. Is not that well understood?

The House was entirely relieved the last time we debated this question, because it was apparent that Poland had decided to help us. But I think it is quite arguable that that Polish support adds to our present risks if it can be obtained only at the cost of not getting Russian support. In that case I do not think we are in any better position than before. Because we want to get as much support in the world as possible when we are attacked; therefore, we must criticize these bilateral agreements. Is there anyone here who does not appreciate that the whole standard in regard to international honor and the sacredness of agreements has been weakened continuously during the last

few years? We know perfectly well that in this country we shall implement our bond, but can we be sure that all these countries with whom we are making bilateral agreements will do so?

Take the risk which is ever present before my eyes — the risk that Germany will attack Holland. With all respect to the Dutch Army and the Dutch Government, really nothing could stop the marvellous, new mechanized army of Germany from overrunning an unsupported Holland in a very short time. If they overrun Holland we are bound to be in that war. We cannot possibly allow either Holland or Belgium to go out as Czechoslovakia did. I suppose there have been talks to see how best support could be given to Holland, but the best support would be to say that if Germany attacks Holland she will have to face us on one front, and she will have her Army attacked from both Poland and Russia on the other. In this matter we must not think just of the bombing of London. To all sensible people that is not the first thing to consider. The first thing to consider is that in certain circumstances we shall be forced into war and must win. It is quite possible unfortunately now that our Government may accept the "fait accompli" and sacrifice Holland. We have no agreement with Holland, but if bilateral agreements are to go forward, then let us have a bilateral agreement with Holland and Russia, so that she will feel secure and Germany will realize the risk she will run in attacking Holland.

In our bilateral agreement with Poland we have obtained an assurance from the Poles that they will come to our help if we come to theirs. It will be noticed, however, that in regard to Greece and Rumania, and presumably in regard to Turkey, the arrangement is not a bilateral agreement, but a pledge by us to do something without a guarantee that they will come to our help. Are we sure that in a war in the Mediterranean Greece would be even neutral? Their harbors would be of little use to us then, but would be of use to Italy. Greece is a dictatorship country, and there is a great deal of sympathy between dictatorships. The dictator, General Metaxas, served his time in the German Army, and he is pro-German. We have not,

therefore, the certainty that the people we are guaranteeing will not be on the other side if trouble comes. These bilateral agreements are a mistake. They are guarantees from us to some endangered country that we will go to their aid. Whether they come to our aid is problematical in any case. We want collective security to be something different from that. Collective security means that the people who will fight shall be united together, firmly bound together, and will consent to fight if any one of them is attacked. It must be a mutual bond. Bilateral agreements merely add to our dangers. Collective security based upon the unity of great Powers who can fight and who cannot be bullied into acquiescence, are all important. A guarantee from Russia, France, Britain and America is good enough, but a guarantee from a small country is not good enough unless the big countries will all come in...

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.) ...I hear it said in the House: "Bring in Russia." The British Government would naturally desire the aid of Russia in war, but do not let us forget that Poland and Rumania have to be considered. I would ask hon. Members if they were waging war in Scotland what they would think if 2,000,000 Red soldiers were billeted on them in England. Would the Church dignitaries like it? Would the propertied class like it? Would anyone with a business interest like it? Hon. Members must put themselves in the place of the people of Poland and Rumania, in order to appreciate their fears in connection with the bringing in of Russia. A Red Army might go to Poland and Rumania and the workers of those countries might think that they would never get the Red army out again. There might be a Red republic in Rumania and Poland. Although that might be desirable from the point of view of the working class, it would not be very desirable from the point of view of Colonel Beck or King Carol.

We are told, again, that we are going to fight for democracy. Where are the democracies for whom we are going to fight? Is it Poland? Is it Colonel Beck, the democrat? Are you going to ask my son or any man in my area or in this country to fight for Colonel Beck, who has imprisoned the Socialists of Poland who cannot even get out of the country or obtain an

ordinary passport to pay a visit to some of the international gatherings that are to take place — to fight for a country where terror has taken place against millions of Jews with a brutality and ferocity that have never been experienced in any part of the world except Germany? There are 3,000,000 Jews almost in a complete concentration camp, with the whip and the butt of the rifle beating their heads; many of them beaten in the by-lanes and back streets of Poland, while the authorities have sat by and allowed it to take place? Is it General Metaxas, for whom I am expected to get up and be enthusiastic? Is it King Carol?

MR. RILEY (Lab.) : . . . We are also further entitled to ask what the Prime Minister's intentions are towards Russia. Does he intend to invite the co-operation of Russia in the building up of a powerful bloc to meet aggression? One knows quite well that certain difficulties stand in the way, for example, the hesitation of Poland to open its territory to Russian troops, and the same is true with regard to Rumania. On the other hand we either do believe that the co-operation of Russia is necessary, or we do not believe it. We either believe that she can be relied upon, or we do not.

There are two considerations with regard to Russia which we ought to bear in mind. It is a commonplace to say that we do not accept the ideological system of Russia. But I do not suppose there is anyone today on either side of the House who would desire to claim that we must not cooperate with a law-abiding country because it has a different kind of Government from our own. We are all agreed that every nation has the right within its own frontiers to its own form of government. Then what is it we hesitate about? Why do the Government hesitate in giving a whole-hearted invitation to Russia to play a part in this difficult situation in Europe? I do not think it can be disputed that ever since 1921, or 1922 at the latest, Russia has never given the slightest ground for suspecting that she entertains aggressive intentions outside her own territory.

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : . . . May I say one word upon one delicate point with regard to this organization for collective peace in Europe? There are some Powers — Poland and Rumania



have been mentioned in this connection — who are said to be a little chary of accepting certain forms of Russian assistance. Anyone who is familiar with conditions in those countries will not need a long explanation of why that is so, but, assuming that it is so, surely if you get a triple alliance — and I have heard that representatives of Poland and Rumania have said that they would be very glad to see an indirect arrangement made whereby we were bound closely with Russia and they were bound closely with us — it might then be a matter for friendly arrangement as to the means by which Russia might best assist those countries if trouble should come.

Here I would like to dwell upon an obvious and hopeful fact. Poland and Rumania are both populous countries with relatively large armies, and for them large reinforcements of man-power from Russia would not be the primary necessity if trouble came. It would rather be the supply of material. Perhaps it might also be the use of air power by appropriate means which would not raise in their minds the same hesitations that large-scale entries of ground troops into their country would raise. Without pursuing this rather delicate subject any further, I would suggest that it is surely within the capacity of the Government, and a most desirable object, that we should get into contact with the Russians, conjointly with those States whose security and independence we are now guaranteeing, to consider means whereby, if trouble should come, the enormous resources of Russia could most acceptably and efficiently be organized into a plan for their defense. I strongly urge that the Government should get down to the consideration of that problem.

SIR SIMON (L. Nat.): On March 29, the Soviet Ambassador was told that we had to recognise that it was useless to pursue the idea of a four-Power declaration, and that we, therefore, had been considering what other line we could usefully take. The Soviet Ambassador was given a provisional outline of the new course we were contemplating, which would involve us giving assurances, together with France, to Poland and Rumania. The Soviet Ambassador recognized that this would be a revolutionary change in British policy and that it

would increase enormously the confidence of other countries. It was made clear in the conversations that we had no intention at all of excluding help from the Soviet Government, if the latter were disposed to afford it, in whatever way was most suitable and effective.

Circumstances then arose, however, which made it necessary for the Prime Minister to make the declaration regarding Poland on that Friday; but before it was made the Soviet Ambassador was informed of the purport of the statement. As soon as ever it was arranged, it was communicated to him. The Soviet Ambassador told the Foreign Secretary, on March 31, that Soviet policy had recently been defined by M. Stalin as assistance against aggression for those who fought for their independence, and the Foreign Secretary received that definition as one would expect it to be received by all of us who wish to get the maximum help from all possible quarters. I think the House will see that the principles by which His Majesty's Government were moved to make their Polish declaration were precisely the same as M. Stalin's own declaration.

It seemed to us, and it seems to us now, self-evident that these principles were not misunderstood by the Soviet Government, and I wish the House plainly to understand that, while these things are more difficult to negotiate with a very large number of Powers that might appear, there is no truth in the suggestion that we have been seeking to find means of avoiding taking Soviet Russia into that system which it is our object to build up as a system of peace against aggression. Since then my Noble Friend has seen the Soviet Ambassador on more than one occasion and has kept him fully informed of the progress of events. I have endeavored to state what has happened, checking it by the documents which I have before me, and I say that it shows that there is no justification for the suggestions which have been made, and indeed, considering the peril in which the free countries of the world now stand, we should be fools if we did not recognize where assistance might be drawn and gladly received.

MR. DALTON (Lab.): May I just remind the right hon. Gentleman of a question I put? Have the Government at any

time proposed to the Russians a definite military alliance between this country, France and the Soviet Union? Have they proposed it, and if so, has it been rejected?

MR. J. SIMON: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I had intended as a matter of fact to say a word about that. I will meet the point and deal with it in another way. There is no objection on our part in principle to such a proposition at all. These things are not always as simple as they may appear, but whatever is the most effective way of organizing the forces of peace is the way that His Majesty's Government will wish to choose. I do not think, powerful as Russia is, that we ought to concentrate the whole of our gaze simply upon that great Power — we have to remember that there are others even nearer to danger than Russia is. But, though I cannot say that that particular proposition has been made, the hon. Gentleman and the House may take it that the Government is raising no objection in principle to any such proposition...

## 9. DANZIG (APRIL 18, 1939)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will give an assurance that any modification in the status of Danzig will be brought before the Council of the League of Nations for approval and that existing Polish rights in Danzig are covered by the British guarantee recently given by him.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The Council of the League of Nations would, of course, have to consider any modification in the status of Danzig in view of the League's special connection with the Free City. The Prime Minister's recent statements in this House will, I trust, have put beyond doubt the nature of the undertakings given to the Polish Government by His Majesty's Government.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 346, p. 163.

10. DANZIG. HITLER'S RENUNCIATION OF THE  
POLISH-GERMAN AGREEMENT. MINISTER  
BECK'S SPEECH IN THE SEYM  
(MAY 8, 1939) \*

ON APRIL 14, 1939 *President Roosevelt sent an appeal to Hitler and Mussolini. He pointed out the danger and dread of a war and proposed that Germany and Italy give assurances that their armies would not attack during a 10-year period and would not seize the territory of any of 31 states of Europe and the Near East; he specifically named these 31 states of Europe and the Near East. At the same time President Roosevelt made the suggestion to reduce the burdens of constantly growing armaments and to open the way for international trade, equal to all nations. On April 20, 1939 Minister Beck sent to Polish representatives abroad the following instructions about the Polish policy concerning Danzig:*

*"In connection with a new wave of rumors, the Polish Government have to state that their attitude to the Danzig question is as follows:*

*(a) The Polish Government hold unswervingly to the position that the German population of the Free City of Danzig should be left in complete freedom of development of their internal political life.*

*(b) The Polish Government cannot resign their fundamental rights, or consent that the enjoyment of such rights should be under the control of a third Party.*

*(c) The Polish Government cannot accept any unilateral decisions in regard to the Danzig question. The German Government are aware of this attitude, and*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 6-8, 11.

*at any moment it may be the subject of negotiation, but there is no sign of any haste on the part of Germany.\**

*On April 27, 1939 Germany renounced the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935 and on April 28, in his Reichstag speech, Hitler rejected President Roosevelt's proposal, and said the following about Danzig:*

*"I have had the following proposal submitted to the Polish Government:*

*"(1) Danzig returns as a Free State into the framework of the German Reich.*

*"(2) Germany receives a route through the Corridor and a railway line at her own disposal possessing the same extra-territorial status for Germany as the Corridor itself has for Poland.*

*"In return, Germany is prepared:*

*"(1) To recognize all Polish economic rights in Danzig.*

*"(2) To ensure for Poland a free harbor in Danzig of any size desired which would have completely free access to the sea.*

*"(3) To accept at the same time the present boundaries between Germany and Poland and to regard them as ultimate.*

*"(4) To conclude a twenty-five year non-aggression treaty with Poland, a treaty therefore which would extend far beyond the duration of my own life.*

*"(5) To guarantee the independence of the Slovak State by Germany, Poland and Hungary jointly — which means in practice the renunciation of any unilateral German hegemony in this territory.*

*"The Polish Government have rejected my offer and have*

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\* The following figures will show the importance of Danzig and Gdynia to the economic life of Poland:

1938 imports and exports by sea, combined,	
via Gdynia	8,713,000 tons
via Danzig	5,982,000 tons

Total	14,695,000 tons
1938 imports and exports by land, combined:	4,212,000 tons.

only declared that they are prepared (1) to negotiate concerning the question of a substitute for the Commissioner of the League of Nations and (2) to consider facilities for the transit traffic through the Corridor.

"I have regretted greatly this incomprehensible attitude of the Polish Government, but that alone is not the decisive fact; the worst is that now Poland, like Czechoslovakia a year ago, believes, under the pressure of a lying international campaign, that it must call up troops, although Germany on her part has not called up a single man and had not thought of proceeding in any way against Poland. As I have said, this is in itself very regrettable and posterity will one day decide whether it was really right to refuse this suggestion made this once by me. This — as I have said — was an endeavor on my part to solve a question which intimately affects the German people by a truly unique compromise, and to solve it to the advantage of both countries. According to my conviction Poland was not a giving party in this solution at all but only a receiving party, because it should be beyond all doubt that Danzig will never become Polish. The intention to attack on the part of Germany, which was merely invented by the international Press, led as you know to the so-called guarantee offer and to an obligation on the part of the Polish Government for mutual assistance, which would also, under certain circumstances, compel Poland to take military action against Germany in the event of a conflict between Germany and any other Power and in which England, in her turn, would be involved. This obligation is contradictory to the agreement which I made with Marshal Pilsudski some time ago, seeing that in this agreement reference is made exclusively to existing obligations, that is at that time, namely, to the obligations of Poland towards France of which we were aware. To extend these obligations subsequently is contrary to the terms of the German-Polish non-aggression pact. Under these circumstances I should not have entered into this pact at that time, because what sense can a non-aggression pact have if one partner in practice leaves open an enormous number of exceptions.

"There is either collective security, that is collective in-

*security and continuous danger of war, or clear agreements which, however, exclude fundamentally any use of arms between the contracting parties. I therefore look upon the agreement which Marshal Pilsudski and I at one time concluded as having been unilaterally infringed by Poland and thereby no longer in existence!*

*"I have sent a communication to this effect to the Polish Government. However, I can only repeat at this point that my decision does not constitute a modification of any attitude in principle with regard to the problems mentioned above. Should the Polish Government wish to come to fresh contractual arrangements governing its relations with Germany, I can but welcome such an idea, provided, of course, that these arrangements are based on an absolutely clear obligation binding both parties in equal measure. Germany is perfectly willing at any time to undertake such obligations and also to fulfill them."*

*Hitler's renunciation of the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement (concluded on January 26, 1934 and effective for 10 years) caused Minister Beck to explain the Polish attitude in the following speech, made in the Sejm on May 5, 1939:*

*"This session of Parliament provides me with an opportunity of filling in some gaps in my work of recent months. The course of international events might perhaps justify more statements by a Foreign Minister than my single exposé in the Senate Commission for Foreign Affairs.*

*(2) On the other hand, it was precisely that swift development of events that prompted me to postpone a public declaration until such time as the principal problems of our foreign policy had taken on a more definite form.*

*(3) The consequences of the weakening of collective international institutions and of a complete change in the method of intercourse between nations, which I have reported on several occasions in both Houses, caused many new problems to arise in different parts of the world. That process and its results have in recent months reached the borders of Poland.*

*(4) A very general definition of these phenomena may be given by saying that relations between individual Powers*

*have taken on a more individual character, with their own specific features. The general rules have been weakened. One nation simply speaks more and more directly to another.*

(5) *As far as we are concerned, very serious events have taken place. Our contact with some Powers has become easier and firmer, while in some cases serious difficulties have arisen. Looking at things chronologically, I refer, in the first place, to our agreement with the United Kingdom, with Great Britain. After repeated diplomatic contacts, designed to define the scope and objects of our future relations, we reached on the occasion of my visit to London a direct agreement based on the principle of mutual assistance in the event of a direct or indirect threat to the independence of one of our countries. The formula of the agreement is known to you from the declaration of Mr. Neville Chamberlain of April 6, the text of which was drafted by mutual agreement and should be regarded as a pact concluded between the two Governments. I consider it my duty to add that the form and character of the comprehensive conversations held in London give a particular value to the agreement. I should like Polish public opinion to be aware that I found on the part of British statesmen not only a profound knowledge of the general political problems of Europe, but also such an attitude towards our country as permitted me to discuss all vital problems with frankness and confidence without any reservations or doubts.*

(6) *It was possible to establish rapidly the principles of Polish-British collaboration, first of all because we made it clear to each other that the intentions of both Governments coincide as regards fundamental European problems; certainly, neither Great Britain nor Poland has any aggressive intentions whatever but they stand equally firmly in defense of certain basic principles of conduct in international life.*

(7) *The parallel declarations of French political leaders confirm that it is agreed between Paris and Warsaw that the efficiency of our defense pact not only cannot be adversely affected by changes in the international situation, but, on the contrary, that this agreement should constitute one of the most essential elements in the political structure of Europe. The*



*Polish-British Agreement, however, has been employed by the Chancellor of the German Reich as the pretext for unilaterally declaring non-existent the agreement which the Chancellor of the Reich concluded with us in 1934.*

(8) *Before passing to the present stage of this matter, allow me to sketch a brief historical outline.*

(9) *The fact that I had the honor actively to participate in the conclusion and execution of the Polish-German Pact imposes on me the duty of analyzing it. The pact of 1934 was a great event in 1934. It was an attempt to improve the course of history as between two great nations, an attempt to escape from the unwholesome atmosphere of daily discord and wider hostile intentions, to rise above the animosity which had accumulated for centuries, and to create deep foundations of mutual respect. An endeavor to oppose evil is always the best form of political activity.*

(10) *The policy of Poland proved our respect for that principle in the most critical moments of recent times.*

(11) *From this point of view the breaking off of that pact is not an insignificant matter. However, every treaty is worth as much as the consequences which follow it. And if the policy and conduct of the other party diverges from the principle of the pact, we have no reason for mourning its weakening or dissolution. The Polish-German Pact of 1934 was a treaty of mutual respect and good neighborly relations, and as such it contributed a positive value to the life of our country, of Germany and of the whole of Europe. But since there has appeared a tendency to interpret it as limiting the freedom of our policy, or as a ground for demanding from us unilateral concessions contrary to our vital interest, it has lost its real character.*

(12) *Let us now pass to the present situation. The German Reich has taken the mere fact of the Polish-British understanding as a motive for the breaking off of the pact of 1934. Various legal objections were raised on the German side. I will take the liberty of referring jurists to the text of our reply to the German memorandum, which will be handed today to the German Government. I will not detain you any longer on the*

diplomatic form of this event, but one of its aspects has a special significance. The Reich Government, as appears from the text of the German memorandum, made its decision on the strength of Press reports, without consulting the views of either the British or the Polish Government as to the character of the agreement concluded. It would not have been difficult to do so, for immediately on my return from London I expressed my readiness to receive the German Ambassador, who has hitherto not availed himself of the opportunity.

(13) Why is this circumstance important? Even for the simplest understanding it is clear that neither the character nor the purpose and scope of the agreement influenced this decision, but merely the fact that such an agreement had been concluded. And this in turn is important for an appreciation of the objects of German policy, since if, contrary to previous declarations, the Government of the Reich interpreted the Polish-German Declaration of non-aggression of 1934 as intended to isolate Poland and to prevent the normal friendly collaboration of our country with the Western Powers, we ourselves should always have rejected such an interpretation.

(14) To make a proper estimate of the situation, we should first of all ask the question, what is the real object of all this? Without that question and our reply, we cannot properly appreciate the real import of German statements with regard to matters of concern to Poland. I have already referred to our attitude towards the West. There remain the questions of the German proposals as to the future of the Free City of Danzig, the communication of the Reich with East Prussia through our province of Pomorze, and the further subjects raised as of common interest to Poland and Germany.

(15) Let us therefore, investigate these problems in turn.

(16) As to Danzig, first some general remarks, The Free City of Danzig was not invented by the Treaty of Versailles. It has existed for many centuries as the result — to speak accurately, and rejecting the emotional factor — of the positive interplay of Polish and German interests. The German merchants of Danzig assured the development and prosperity of

*that city, thanks to the overseas trade of Poland. Not only the development, but the very raison d'être of the city was formerly due to the decisive fact of its situation at the mouth of our only great river, and today to its position on the main waterway and railway line connecting us with the Baltic. This is a truth which no new formula can change. The population of Danzig is today predominantly German, but its livelihood and prosperity depend on the economic potentialities of Poland.*

(17) *What conclusions have we drawn from this fact? We have stood and stand firmly on the ground of the rights and interests of our sea-borne trade and our maritime policy in Danzig. While seeking reasonable and conciliatory solutions, we have purposely not endeavored to exert any pressure on the free national, ideological and cultural development of the German majority in the Free City.*

(18) *I shall not prolong this speech by quoting examples. They are sufficiently well known to all who have been in any way concerned with the question. But when, after repeated statements by German statesmen, who had respected our standpoint and expressed the view that "This provincial town will not be the object of a conflict between Poland and Germany," I hear a demand for the annexation of Danzig to the Reich, when I receive no reply to our proposal of March 26 for a joint guarantee of the existence and rights of the Free City, and subsequently I learn that this has been regarded as a rejection of negotiations — I have to ask myself, what is the real object of all this?*

(19) *Is it the freedom of the German population of Danzig (which is not threatened), or a matter of prestige, or is it a matter of barring Poland from the Baltic, from which Poland will not allow herself to be barred?*

(20) *The same considerations apply to communication across our province of Pomorze. I insist on the term "province of Pomorze." The word "corridor" is an artificial invention, for this is an ancient Polish territory with an insignificant percentage of German colonists.*

(21) *We have given the German Reich all railway facilities, we have allowed its citizens to travel without customs or*

*passport formalities from the Reich to East Prussia. We have suggested the extension of similar facilities to road traffic.*

(22) *And here again the question arises — what is the real object of it all?*

(23) *We have no interest in obstructing German citizens in their communication with their eastern province. But we have, on the other hand, no reason whatever to restrict our sovereignty on our own territory.*

(24) *On the first and second points, i.e., the question of the future of Danzig and of communication across Pomorze, it is still a matter of unilateral concessions which the Government of the Reich appear to be demanding from us. A self-respecting nation does not make unilateral concessions. Where, then, is the reciprocity? It appears somewhat vague in the German proposals. The Chancellor of the Reich mentioned in his speech a triple condominium in Slovakia. I am obliged to state that I heard this proposal for the first time in the Chancellor's speech of April 28. In certain previous conversations only allusions were made to the effect that in the event of a general agreement the question of Slovakia could be discussed. We did not attempt to go further with such conversations, since it is not our custom to bargain with the interest of others. Similarly, the proposal for a prolongation of the pact of non-aggression for twenty-five years was not advanced in any concrete form in any of the recent conversations. Here also unofficial hints were made, emanating, it is true, from prominent representatives of the Reich Government. But in such conversations various other hints were made which extended much further than the subjects under discussion. I reserve the right to return to this matter if necessary.*

(25) *In his speech the Chancellor of the Reich proposes, as a concession on his part, the recognition and definite acceptance of the present frontier between Poland and Germany. I must point out that this would only have been a question of recognizing what is de jure and de facto our indisputable property. Consequently, this proposal likewise cannot affect my contention that the German desiderata regarding Danzig and a motor road constitute unilateral demands.*

(26) *In the light of these explanations, the House will rightly expect from me an answer to the last passage of the German memorandum, which says: "If the Polish Government attach importance to a new settlement of Polish-German relations by means of a treaty, the German Government are prepared to do this." It appears to me that I have already made clear our attitude, but for the sake of order I will make a résumé.*

(27) *The motive for concluding such an agreement would be the word "peace," which the Chancellor emphasized in his speech.*

(28) *Peace is certainly the object of the difficult and intensive work of Polish diplomacy. Two conditions are necessary for this word to be of real value: (1) peaceful intentions, (2) peaceful methods of procedure. If the Government of the Reich are really guided by those two pre-conditions in relation to this country, then all conversations, provided, of course, that they respect the principle I have already enumerated are possible.*

(29) *If such conversations take place, the Polish Government will, according to their custom, approach the problem objectively, having regard to the experience of recent times, but without withholding their utmost good will.*

(30) *Peace is a valuable and desirable thing. Our generation, which has shed its blood in several wars, surely deserves a period of peace. But peace, like almost everything in this world, has its price, high but definable. We in Poland do not recognize the conception of "peace at any price." There is only one thing in the life of men, nations and States which is without price, and that is honor."*

MR. JOHN MORGAN (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister what is the appropriate machinery for enabling the question of the future status and administration of Danzig to be made the subject of arbitration before an international tribunal; and whether the Government are prepared to take steps to promote such a treatment of this grave problem?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The status of Danzig is regulated by Treaty. The question of any change in that status is in practice a matter in the first instance for the parties most directly interested in the Treaty settlement, and it is for them to agree upon the methods by which they should proceed. It has been repeatedly made clear that His Majesty's Government stand for the settlement of international differences by friendly negotiation, arbitration, or other peaceful means, and they are at all times ready to lend their good offices at the request of the interested parties.

MR. MORGAN: In the event of these direct negotiations breaking down, or reaching a stage when they look like breaking down, have His Majesty's Government any machinery in mind for dealing with such a situation?

MR. BUTLER: I said that we are at all times ready to lend our good offices at the request of interested parties. If we received such a request we should naturally lend our good offices.

MR. MORGAN: Good offices are not exactly machinery. Is there any machine available in international law which would enable such arbitration to be effective?

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR A. LAMBERT WARD (C.): Is it any use attempting to set up such a tribunal until one has some assurance that both parties to the dispute are prepared to abide by the verdict?

MR. BUTLER: In answer to the direct question of the hon. Member I think that this case could be covered by the terms of the Locarno arbitration treaty.

MR. T. JOHNSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether at the time of the British guarantee to Poland on March 31, 1939, any advice was tendered to Poland regarding the desirability of her entering into immediate negotiations or discussions with the German Reich for an amicable settlement of the future control and status of Danzig, and reasonable communications between the Reich and East Prussia; and whether, in view of the danger to the peace of the world involved in the present state of affairs in the Danzig area, he can impress up-

on the Polish Government the necessity of satisfying British public opinion that every reasonable proposal for an equitable settlement will be welcomed.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : The right hon. Gentleman will doubtless have read the speech made by the Polish Foreign Minister on May 5, from which it is apparent that these questions were already under discussion between the Polish and German Governments before the date of His Majesty's Government's assurance to Poland. The Polish Government are, of course, aware that His Majesty's Government would welcome an amicable settlement, and I have no reason to doubt that they are alive to the importance of the consideration contained in the second part of the question.

MR. J. MORGAN : Is the Prime Minister ready to avail himself of any likely breakdown to offer his good services?

THE PRIME MINISTER : My right hon. Friend has already answered that question.

MR. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make on the Polish Foreign Minister's proposals for the settlement of present difficulties between Germany and Poland.

THE PRIME MINISTER : His Majesty's Government welcome the terms at once firm and conciliatory of the speech recently addressed by the Polish Foreign Minister to the Sejm, and they have taken due note of the proposals made by him therein.

## 11. JEWISH EMIGRATION (MAY 10, 1939)\*

**O**F POLAND'S TOTAL population in 1939 of 35,339,000 about 3,460,000 or 9.8% were Jews. Between 1934 and 1938 the number of Jews who emigrated to Palestine amounted to 53,500. During each of the last two of these years, 1937 and 1938, less than 3,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine.

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether, during the visits of the Polish and Rumanian foreign ministers to this country, any discussions took place with regard to increased facilities for Jewish emigration from these countries, in relation in particular to Palestine; and with what results.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): As regards the discussions with Monsieur Beck on this subject, I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the communique issued on April 6.\*\* Similar conversations took place with Monsieur Gafencu, but in neither case did the discussions cover Jewish emigration to Palestine.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 445-446.

\*\* Communique on question of emigration of Jews from Poland issued on April 6, 1939.

In the course of the recent conversations in London Monsieur Beck expressed the desire that any international effort for the treatment of the Jewish problem should be extended to that of the Jews in Poland, and that Jewish emigrants from Poland should have their due share in any opportunity of settlement which may be found. Monsieur Beck at the same time, at the request of the Rumanian Government, drew attention to the similar problem existing in Rumania.

"Monsieur Beck was assured that His Majesty's Government fully appreciated the difficulties to which he had referred, and would at any time be ready to examine with the Polish and Rumanian Governments proposals for a solution of the particular problems arising in Poland and Rumania which are part of a larger problem."



MR. MANDER: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether an assurance was given to these foreign Ministers that facilities would be granted for increasing Jewish emigration to Palestine or elsewhere?

MR. BUTLER: The discussions did not cover Jewish emigration, but in general Colonel Beck was assured that His Majesty's Government fully appreciated the difficulties and that they would be ready to examine with the Polish and Rumanian Governments proposals for a solution of the particular problems arising in those two countries.

CAPTAIN CAZALET (C.): Can my right hon. Friend say whether the application of Polish Jews for admission to Palestine has been considered, or not?

MR. BUTLER: I cannot answer as to that.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.): Is it not the case that Jews are treated just as brutally in Poland and Rumania as in Germany?

MR. HANNAH (C.): Does not British Guiana offer better scope than Palestine?

## 12. GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

(MAY 10, 1939)\*

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) (by Private Notice) asked the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the statement issued in Moscow regarding the proposals of the British Government and whether, in view of this, he will now state the nature of the proposals made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the reply of His Majesty's Government.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have seen the statement to which the right hon. Gentleman refers and which seems to be based upon some misunderstanding of the suggestions actually put forward by His Majesty's Government to the Soviet Govern-

\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 453-456.

ment. Though conversations are still in progress and the House will not, therefore, expect me to discuss these matters in detail, I think it right, in view of this statement, to place the House in possession of the general line on which the conversations have been hitherto proceeding.

As the House is aware, His Majesty's Government recently accepted a definite obligation in respect of certain Eastern European States. They did this in pursuance of their declared policy of assisting those States to resist any attempt, if such were made, to threaten their independence. His Majesty's Government undertook these obligations without inviting the Soviet Government to participate directly in them, in view of certain difficulties to which, as the House is well aware, any such suggestion would inevitably give rise. His Majesty's Government accordingly suggested to the Soviet Government that they should make, on their own behalf, a declaration of similar effect to that already made by His Majesty's Government, in the sense that, in the event of Great Britain and France being involved in hostilities in discharge of their own obligations thus accepted, the Soviet Government, on their side, would express their readiness also to lend assistance, if desired. Such a declaration, if the Soviet Government feel able to make it, seems to His Majesty's Government to be in accord with the recent pronouncement of M. Stalin, that it is the policy of the Soviet Government to support countries which might be victims of aggression and which were prepared to defend their own independence.

Almost simultaneously the Soviet Government suggested a scheme at once more comprehensive and more rigid which, whatever other advantages it might present, must in the view of His Majesty's Government inevitably raise the very difficulties which their own proposals had been designed to avoid. His Majesty's Government accordingly pointed out to the Soviet Government the existence of these difficulties. At the same time they made certain modifications in their original proposals. In particular, they made it plain that it was no part of their intention that the Soviet Government should commit themselves to intervene, irrespective of whether Great Britain

and France had already, in discharge of their obligations, done so. His Majesty's Government added that, if the Soviet Government wished to make their own intervention contingent on that of Great Britain and France, His Majesty's Government for their part would have no objection.

My Noble Friend yesterday saw the Soviet Ambassador, who explained to him that the Soviet Government were still not clear whether under the proposal of His Majesty's Government circumstances might not arise in which the Soviet Government would be committed to intervention unsupported by His Majesty's Government or France. My Noble Friend assured the Ambassador that this was definitely not the intention of the proposal made by His Majesty's Government and that, if there were any room for doubt on this point, my Noble Friend anticipated that it could without difficulty be removed. He accordingly invited the Soviet Ambassador to place His Majesty's Government in possession of the precise grounds on which these doubts of his Government were based, if they still existed, and this the Soviet Ambassador readily agreed to do.

I should add that the British Ambassador in Moscow had an interview two days ago with M. Molotov, at the conclusion of which M. Molotov promised that the Soviet Government would give careful consideration to our proposals, and we are now awaiting their reply.

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : Would it not be a good thing, in order to speed up these very slow negotiations, the slowness of which is causing grave apprehension in the country, that Lord Halifax should proceed to Moscow and have a straightforward discussion with M. Molotov?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think we had better await the reply of the Soviet Government and then we shall see what further steps are required.

MR. MANDER: The Prime Minister has been good enough to explain to the House the policy put forward by His Majesty's Government to Russia, and will he be good enough at the same time to explain the so-called rigid proposals of the Russian Government which the British Government have been unable to accept?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I do not think it is necessary for me to add anything to the statement I have made.

MR. ATTLEE: May I take it from the Prime Minister that in these negotiations we are keeping in the closest touch with the French Government, in order that the views of all three Governments may be clear before the making, as we hope, of a firm agreement against aggression?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes Sir, we are keeping in the closest touch with the French Government continuously.

MR. THURTL (Lab.): Will the Prime Minister assure the House that the Government regard the conclusion of these negotiations as a matter of real urgency?

THE PRIME MINISTER: We regard it as of the greatest importance and of real urgency.

MR. A. HENDERSON: (Lab.): Can the House take it that His Majesty's Government have not finally closed their minds to, if circumstances necessitate, the conclusion of a military alliance with Russia?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I cannot answer a hypothetical question. Discussions are going on on certain lines, and we are very hopeful that they will soon come to a satisfactory issue.

MR. BENJAMIN SMITH (Lab.): Could the Prime Minister tell us whether the terms set out would include, if Great Britain found herself attacked by an aggressor, assistance by Russia to this country?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I made a careful and full statement, and I think it is very much better that I should not add to it.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): Do the Government's proposals contemplate only the contingency of war? Do they not also contemplate the contingency of peaceful negotiations, and is there any assurance to Russia that, if peaceful negotiations are entered into, Russia will be a party to those negotiations?

THE PRIME MINISTER: What the negotiations are contemplating is an act of aggression.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): Can the Prime Minister confirm the point that the guarantee given to Poland does not in any way preclude an alliance with Russia, and that Colonel Beck gave express assurances on that point?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Does the hon. Member mean an alliance between this country and Russia?

MR. NOEL-BAKER: Yes.

THE PRIME MINISTER: No, that is not excluded.

MR. NOEL BAKER: And did Colonel Beck raise no objection?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I did not say that at all. The question which the hon. Member asked me was whether the arrangement with Poland excluded the possibility of an alliance between this country and Russia, and to that I said "No".

### 13. SLOVAKIA

(MAY 15, 1939)\*

*ON MARCH 13, 1939 Slovakia proclaimed her independence, and Hitler offered to protect it. An agreement was concluded in Vienna on March 18, 1939 between Germany and Slovakia in which Germany guaranteed to protect the boundaries of Slovakia for twenty-five years and in return received permission to construct and man fortifications along the Slovakian border. Slovakia was to remain an independent state with her own army, currency and diplomatic representatives abroad.*

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to recognize Slovakia as an independent State.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): In order to facilitate the conduct of normal business His Majesty's Consul at Bratislava has, on my Noble Friend's instructions, sought and obtained from the Slovak Government recognition as His Majesty's Consul for Slovakia. The Slovak Government have been informed that His Majesty's Government regard this step as amounting to de facto recognition.

\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 961-962.

MR. HENDERSON: Are the Government satisfied that the Government of Slovakia are quite independent of political control from other quarters?

MR. BUTLER: I have given the hon. and learned Member the answer to his question, which is that we have given them de facto recognition.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER FLETCHER (Lab.): Do His Majesty's Government propose to recognize the de facto annexation of Italy by Germany?

#### 14. POLAND, RUSSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN (MAY 15, 1939)\*

DURING MAY 1939 Russian Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Potemkin made visits to some of Russia's neighboring countries. After his visits to Ankara and Bucharest, he went to Warsaw, where he had a talk with Polish Foreign Minister Beck. The text of the conversation was communicated by M. Beck to the Polish Ambassador in Paris on May 13 in the following telegram:

*The conversations with M. Potemkin during his stay in Warsaw on the 10 inst., have made it clear that the Soviet Government takes an understanding attitude to our point of view with regard to Polish-Soviet relations, which are now developing quite normally.*

*The Soviets realize that the Polish Government is not prepared to enter into any agreement with either one of Poland's great neighbors against the other, and understand the advantages to them of this attitude.*

*M. Potemkin also stated that in the event of an armed conflict between Poland and Germany the Soviets will adopt "une attitude bienveillante" towards us.*

*As M. Potemkin himself indicated, his statements*

\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 962.

*were made in accordance with special instructions which the Soviet Government sent to Warsaw for him.*

MR. BOOTHBY (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether the Governments of Poland or Rumania have made any formal objection to the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance between this country and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The views of the Polish and Rumanian Governments have not been given formal shape, but their general attitude towards the negotiations which His Majesty's Government are conducting with the Soviet Government is known, both as a result of the visits of the Polish and Rumanian Foreign Ministers to this country and through diplomatic channels. It would certainly be inappropriate for me to disclose the views which have been thus expressed, more particularly as the recent visits of the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs to Bucharest and Warsaw will have given an opportunity for an exchange of views between the representatives of the Soviet Government on the one hand and of the Rumanian and Polish Governments on the other.

MR. BOOTHBY: May we take it that there is no objection in principle to the conclusion of some form of agreement between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government?

LIEUT.-COLONEL ACLAND-TROYTE (C.): Is not this another of those questions which are likely to make the conclusion of successful negotiations difficult?

15. BALTIC STATES — MEMEL  
(MAY 15, 1939)\*

MR. COCKS (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister what obligations have His Majesty's Government to defend Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania against aggression; and whether, in the event of Russia being involved in war as a result of defending any of the States against aggression, His Majesty's Government are under obligation to come to the aid of Russia.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): His Majesty's Government are under no obligations to these States except such as may derive from their membership of the League of Nations. I can add nothing to the statement made earlier today by the Prime Minister on the progress of Anglo-Soviet discussions.

MR. COCKS: Arising out of the answer to the second part of my question, will the Government consider closing this obvious gap in the peace front, thus securing the co-operation of Russia by removing one of the objections to the British proposals recently formulated on behalf of that Government?

MR. BUTLER: I cannot add anything to the statement made, but naturally all such matters will come under review.

MR. BOSSOM (C.): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the invaluable aid given by Great Britain to these small countries when they got their independence in 1919, and will he keep this matter in mind in the negotiations with Russia?

MR. BUTLER: Yes, Sir.

MR. WEDGWOOD BENN (Lab.): When the right hon. Gentleman says we have no obligations to them, has he overlooked our position as a guarantor of Memel?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 962-963.



MR. BUTLER: The answer which I gave originally represents the position.

MR. BENN: That is to say, the Government have not recognized any obligation as a joint guarantor with other powers for Memel?

MR. A. HENDERSON (Lab.) Is it not a fact that the Government have obligations to all these countries under the provisions of the League Covenant?

MR. BUTLER: As I have said several times today, my original answer said that.

## 16. GUARANTEES TO POLAND.

### TALKS WITH RUSSIA.

(MAY 19, 1939)\*

*M*ANY MEMBERS SPOKE of the *International Situation on May 19, 1939 in the House of Commons. Winston Churchill made a long speech in which he demanded that Russia be included in the general agreements concerning guarantees in Europe.*

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (Ind. L.): . . . We have guaranteed Poland and Rumania. Think of that as a military proposition to begin with without Russia. Poland has a frontier of 1,500 miles to defend against Germany. The Maginot Line is only 600 miles down to the Mediterranean, and Poland has no Maginot Line. Germany will choose her point of attack on that 1,500-mile front. Where is she concentrating? If Poland is attacked from Danzig, Pomorze or from Silesia, what help can we render? I would like to put that question to the General Staff. I asked a question the other day and I had no answer, whether the General Staff were consulted as to the military possibilities of re-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 1817-1822, 1832-1860, 1873-1882.

deeming that pledge before it was given. I think the House ought to know that. If so, how could they send reinforcements to Poland? Airplanes — they would be faced by a more formidable air fleet, unless we have Russia. They could not send a single tank or a single gun. How are you going to redeem that pledge without Russia?

Again, I ask, were the General Staff consulted before that pledge was given, and if so, are they prepared to say on their own responsibility that, without the aid of Russia, they can redeem it? The same thing applies to Rumania. The Polish army is a very considerable army, and if they were as well equipped as the Germans, I believe they could put up a fight. But they are not. Poland is a comparatively poor country. It has neither the financial nor industrial resources to enable it to throw up great defenses, to turn out great guns, to construct tanks or airplanes. Will the Government tell me how they are going to do it without Russia?

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) ...The British Government have sought for a unilateral declaration from the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, that in the event of an attack on Rumania or Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will come to the help of those countries in the same way that Great Britain and France will do. On the other hand, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has taken up the line that there should be a pact of mutual assistance between Great Britain, France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and any other States that may come into a guarantee against aggression — I think something more than just aggression against those States, I think against aggression anywhere, on a basis of reciprocity, but particularly in those areas. The difference between those two proposals seems to me to be one of principle. I can only gather from the Press what the general line is, but it seems to me that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Government is standing out for the principle of collective security against aggression — that principle to which His Majesty's Government are pledged by their last Election appeal, and that principle which we have always supported on this side. It is a principle which recognizes that

aggression is not a localized concern, but the concern of all States, because it is a breach of the rule of law in international affairs, the observance of which is a prime condition of peace. But the Government do not seem to me ever to subscribe to this principle. They consider all these questions in the light of what they regard as British interests, and I think they have a narrow conception of British interests. They have their points where they are prepared to resist aggression, and the fact that they have those points means that, in other places, they are prepared to condone aggression, and the history of the last few years has shown that that is so.

The action taken, which we welcome, in making an agreement with Turkey,\* and guaranteeing Poland and Rumania was, I think, right, but that action was undertaken because the Government realized that this was a matter which did concern what they call British interests. But in our view you cannot separate British interests from the interests of the civilized world. I think the line taken by the Government of the U.S.S.R. is the only realist one. I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) showed quite plainly that there is a strategic unity in Europe, and that you cannot separate it. I think we ought to be realists today.

THE PRIME MINISTER: . . . The policy which His Majesty's Government are following at the present time, as the House is aware, has taken on a new development since the joining up of Bohemia and Moravia with the German Reich. I do not know whether the German Government themselves, at the time when they took the action that they did, realized the tremendous repercussions which that action would cause in the world. It was said at the time that it was carried out with the assent of the Czechoslovak Government, but very little attention was paid to that account because everybody knew that there was an overwhelming German force just behind the door — if in fact, some of it had not already slipped through. Perhaps even more than the annexation, in such circumstances of another State,

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\* On May 12, 1939.

what disturbed profoundly the public mind everywhere was the patent contradiction between these proceedings and the assurances which had so frequently and so solemnly been given to the world by the German Government. That contradiction completely undermined the sense of security in Europe, and it created a widespread feeling that the independence of no small State was safe if it stood in the way of German ambitions. I am not saying now whether those views were correct or not; I am saying that those views were created by the action of the German Government.

Therefore, as I said a moment ago, it really was useless for the German Government to deny that they cherished any design against the independence of others, because by their action they had created suspicion which they could no longer allay. It seemed to us that unless some new stabilizing factor could be introduced into Europe, the dissolution of a large part of Europe might be imminent. It was in those circumstances that His Majesty's Government thought that it was their duty, in conjunction with France, to intervene and to try to supply this new stabilizing factor. It was necessary to act quickly because apprehensions of attack were acute in certain particular quarters and we felt, therefore, that it was not possible to wait while we endeavored to build up a system or combination to resist such attacks, and we took the course which, I think, has been generally approved of acting ourselves, and promptly, by giving assurances of support in the quarters where they would be most needed.

It will be seen from what I have said that the assurances which we gave first to Poland and afterwards to Rumania and to Greece, were not the end of the measures that we had in mind. They were what one might call first-aid treatment given to avoid any further deterioration in the situation. It still remains to strengthen them by more permanent arrangements and to try and get more support for them from any other quarters that are able and willing to give that support. I want to make it clear that this policy is not a policy of lining up opposing blocs of Powers in Europe animated by hostile intentions towards one another and accepting the view that war

is inevitable. I was very much surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman opposite indicate, as I thought, that some of us on this side regarded war as inevitable. I never regard war as inevitable until it has begun, and the gloomier the picture and the more formidable the appearance that war may be coming, the more strenuously I think should one strive to make it avoidable. We are always trying to avoid this policy of what I call opposing blocs, because it seems to us to be essentially an unstable policy, one which cannot be relied upon to remain the same and one which is, therefore, fundamentally dangerous.

In the policy which we are pursuing there is not any element of aggression, nor does it exclude the possibility of discussion, in the spirit of good will, on any points of difference between nations. It is a policy of precaution, a policy which is operative only in certain conditions which it is in the power of others to bring or not to bring into existence; it is an assurance against forcible aggression which may not, and we hope never will, arise. It is a policy which seems to us to be necessary, because without it we can see no prospect of establishing a sense of security or stability in Europe. Without that prospect it is, of course, inevitable that trade and enterprise should be stifled, and impossible that the conditions of life of the people in general should be improved. It would be a great mistake to under-rate the impression, the effect, the concrete effect produced by the mere fact that we gave those assurances. As I remember saying at the time, they constitute an enormous departure from the policy hitherto pursued by this country, and, indeed, I think one may say that, if such ideas had been put forward even up to a few months ago, they would probably have been denounced and repudiated by the great majority of people in this country. The fact that they can be accepted, as they were accepted, with general approval, is the result, in the main, of those repercussions which have arisen out of the action of the German Government in Bohemia and Moravia to which I have already alluded.

... I turn to the discussions with the Government of the Soviet Union. I cannot help thinking that there has been some misunderstanding, because the right hon. Gentleman the Leader

of the Opposition, in the conclusion of his speech, put forward an idea which I have no doubt is held by many of his friends and supporters, namely, that the British Government were actuated in their conduct of these negotiations by mistrust of Russian ideology. I have said before that that is not so. I want to repeat it now. We are not concerned at all with Russian internal political doctrine. We are concerned with the best method of building up what my right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) has called a peace front. If we can evolve a method by which we can enlist the co-operation and assistance of the Soviet Union in building up that peace front, we welcome it; we want it; we attach value to it. The suggestion that we despise the assistance of the Soviet Union is without foundation. Without accepting any view of an unauthorized character as to the precise value of the Russian military forces, or the way in which they would best be employed, no one would be so foolish as to suppose that that huge country, with its vast population and enormous resources, would be a negligible factor in such a situation as that with which we are confronted. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will dismiss any idea that, because we do not agree with the internal system of Government of the Soviet Union, that has in any way affected our outlook in the present negotiations, or the way in which we are conducting them.

The House may remember a recent statement by M. Stalin that it was the policy of the Soviet Union "to support States which might be victims of aggression, provided that they were prepared to defend their independence." That is our own point of view, and it appeared to indicate that the Soviet Union might\* be prepared to collaborate in carrying this aim into effect. But we are also aware—and this is a point which has not been referred to at all up to the present—that the direct participation of the Soviet Union in this matter might not be altogether in accordance with the wishes of some of the countries for whose benefit, or on whose behalf, these arrangements were being made. We would desire to have the collaboration of all these countries, and we do not want to have any

division among them. Accordingly, we suggested to the Soviet Government that they should make a declaration with regard to Poland and Rumania similar to the one which had been made by ourselves and France, namely, that if Great Britain and France should be involved in conflict in consequence of undertakings which we had given to those countries, or either of them, the Soviet Union should express its readiness to lend its assistance to Poland or Rumania, as the case might be, always provided, of course, that their assistance was desired.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.): They are not children.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The Soviet Government, apparently, thought that this offer was not reciprocal. The right hon. Gentleman this morning evidently took the same view, which he expressed with characteristic vehemence.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE indicated dissent.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The right hon. Gentleman only means that it was not characteristic. He can be much more vehement even than he was this morning. I want to say now that the British Government have never desired to ask the Soviet Government to do anything which they were not prepared to do themselves. They have always wanted the arrangement to be reciprocal, and I do really find it difficult to understand why it should be thought, or why it should ever have been thought, that the suggestion we made was lacking in reciprocity.

MR. COCKS (Lab.): It was not the same as the Agreement with Turkey.

THE PRIME MINISTER: If it be argued that it did not provide for the case of a direct attack on the Soviet Union, agreed; but it did not provide for the case of a direct attack on this country. The hon. Member said that it was not the same as the Agreement with Turkey. If I may be allowed to say so, that is not the point. The point is, was it reciprocal? I am not saying it was the same as the Agreement with Turkey, or with any country. What I want to examine is, was it unfair? Did it ask of the Soviet Union something more than we were prepared to do ourselves? It may be argued that it did not cover the case of certain States, other than Poland and Ru-

mania, which are neighbors of Russia, and through which perhaps she might be attacked. Again, I say, it is quite true that it did not cover that, but, on the other hand, it equally did not apply to certain western States which, if attacked, might cause us ultimately to be involved in war.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): Why not?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Again, I am not saying whether this was the same as any other treaty. What I am saying is that it is quite wrong to say that it was not reciprocal. I think I made it plain that our suggestion did not contemplate that the Soviet Government should intervene irrespective of whether Great Britain and France did so—although, as a matter of fact, our own commitments which follow upon the assurances we have given are irrespective of whether the Soviet Union come in. Therefore, if there be any inequality between the two States in the proposals which have been made the inequality was in favor of the Soviet Union and not of this country. We rely on a matter of that kind because it is a question of fact, and although I have given a little time to explaining our position, it is really because the Soviet Union really seemed to believe that we had tried to put an unfair proposal upon them, and because color was given to that view by the intervention of the right hon. Gentleman. It really is a misunderstanding, and whatever can be alleged against our proposal, I am sure that it cannot be alleged truly that it was unfair.

Nevertheless, since the proposal was not acceptable to the Soviet Union, we tried again. What we, above all, were anxious for was, that we should be able to come to an agreement quickly, and it is always easy to come to an agreement quickly if you accept everything that the other side puts up. (An Hon. Member: "That is what you did at Munich.") No doubt that is what some would have done. I do ask the House to remember that in this matter we are trying to build up, not an alliance between ourselves and other countries, but a peace front against aggression, and we should not be succeeding in that policy, if, by ensuring the co-operation of one country, we rendered another country uneasy and unwilling to collaborate with us. Therefore, I suggest to the Committee that in this



matter, which is one of great difficulty and delicacy, a certain amount of caution is necessary, caution arising not out of ideological differences, not out of pure obstinacy, not even because we think that one course serves narrow British interests better than another, but because the object of our policy is to build up this peace front. We would rather delay for a few days longer than hastily take a step which might result in the work that we had already done crumbling before our very eyes.

We thought that perhaps the Soviet Government might have been willing to declare its agreement with us on those matters on which we could agree, and that it would be prepared to let us discuss further, and at greater leisure, the subjects on which difficulties still existed. That, in our view, would have been a wise course to take to show agreement and I cannot help thinking that, if we agreed even on a part of the policy to be pursued, it would have made it easier to come to a complete agreement on the rest. I cannot help saying how much I regret the decision of the Soviet Government not to let M. Potemkin go to Geneva. The Geneva Council was postponed for a week in order to allow him to go there, but after it had been postponed we heard that he could not go. My Noble Friend will, therefore, be deprived of the opportunity of discussing personally with him these matters, which, I think, might have been valuable for both of us. No doubt the Soviet Government had good reasons for their action, but I only regret that it was not possible for this meeting to take place. This is one of the cases in which I cannot help feeling that there is a sort of veil, a sort of wall between the two Governments which it is extremely difficult to penetrate, and that if only that opportunity had been afforded us we might have, perhaps, managed to shake hands across the gap.

SIR A. SINCLAIR: Would it not help the Committee to break down that wall and pierce that veil, if the right hon. Gentleman would tell us what are His Majesty's Government's objections to the Russian Government's proposals?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I thought that I had made that perfectly clear. I will repeat it again. I am not going any further

than I have gone already. The Committee will realize that I must walk warily, and I do not want to say anything which will make things more difficult than they are already. What I have said was, that we are not concerned merely with the Russian Government. We have other Governments to consider. (AN HON. MEMBER: "Italy") I am not going any further.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: It is vital that we should know who it is that is standing in the way.

THE PRIME MINISTER: It may be vital for the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: That is nonsense. It is vital for the country.

THE PRIME MINISTER: There may be those who are out just to damage the Government or to make mischief, but those who want this policy to succeed, as His Majesty's Government do, will, I think, refrain from pressing us unduly to disclose the exact point where the difficulties arise, when I have already given them a general indication.

I have nothing more to say except this. Throughout this matter we have been in close touch with the Government of France, with whom we are happy to have collaboration and counsel. There is no difference between us, and my Noble Friend the Foreign Secretary will have the opportunity tomorrow for further discussions with the head of the French Government and with their Foreign Minister. I do trust that after this consultation, and with their help, it may be found possible to overcome those obstacles which have hitherto prevented us from reaching an agreement with the Government of the Soviet Union, and that we shall be able in due course to report to the House that we have at last made a final agreement with them.

MR. CHURCHILL (C.): The cool and deft Parliamentary reply which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has just delivered has not, I think, carried the Committee very much further. Nor has it, I venture to say, reassured those who feel deep misgivings about the present situation. One could hardly have expected to hear that after many weeks of negotiation, at a most vital moment, there was a complete deadlock, for the

moment, between the Russian Soviet Government and His Majesty's Government. One has not received, I think, any very clear account of the differences which exist, nor of the reason or substance which lie in those differences. We have been told that the negotiations are still proceeding and that the situation is extremely delicate. That may be quite true, but they have been proceeding all these weeks, and the time may be very short. I have been quite unable to understand what is the objection to making the agreement with Russia which the Prime Minister professes himself desirous of doing, and making it in the broad and simple form proposed by the Russian Soviet Government. I have learned nothing to-day from the right hon. Gentleman which throws the least light on that. . .

There is a great identity of interests between Great Britain and the associated Powers in the South. Is there not a similar identity of interests in the North? Take the countries of the Baltic, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which were once the occasion of the wars of Peter the Great. It is a vital major interest of Russia that these Powers should not fall into the hands of Nazi Germany. That is a vital interest in the North. I need not elaborate the arguments about the Ukraine which means an invasion of Russian territory. All along the whole of this eastern front you can see that the major interests of Russia are definitely engaged, and, therefore, it seems that you could fairly judge that they would pool their interests with other countries similarly affected.

I should have thought that this plan of a triple alliance is a preliminary step, and an invitation to other countries in danger on this front to come under its protection, was the most straightforward and practical manner of approaching the subject. I do not know whether I can commend it to my right hon. Friend by adopting a simile selected as a special compliment to him. It is like setting up an armoured umbrella, under which other countries will be invited to take shelter as and when they seek to do so. But we cannot exclude from our minds the fact that we are in a deadlock at the moment. What are the differences? . . . We have already given guarantees to Poland and Rumania, and the Government tell us that they

would be glad if Russia would give similar guarantees. Consequently, if Poland and Rumania are attacked we shall be in the war, and so will Russia. It is almost axiomatic that those who are allies of the same Power are allied of one another. It is almost axiomatic.

If you are ready to be an ally of Russia in time of war, which is the supreme test, the great occasion of all, if you are ready to join hands with Russia in the defense of Poland, which you have guaranteed, and of Rumania, why should you shrink from becoming the ally of Russia now, when you may by that very fact prevent the breaking out of war? I cannot understand all these refinements of diplomacy and delay. If the worst comes to the worst you are in the midst of it with them, and you have to make the best of it with them. If the difficulties do not arise, well, you will have had the security in the preliminary stages.

Now I must deal with some of the objections. The right hon. Gentleman, very prudently, did not wish to discuss the position of some of the other countries. We know, however, that the names of some of those countries are being used in discussion, and it is absolutely necessary that we should look a little at the position of those different countries. Take, in the first place, Poland. It is not true to say that Poland is an obstacle to the formation of this triple alliance. The Government will contradict me if they feel it necessary to do so, but I cannot believe that the Polish Government will consider it any part of their duty to place a barrier between France, England and Russia for their own mutual security. Poland would naturally not wish that her affairs should be decided over her head, and I notice with great satisfaction that when M. Potemkin visited Warsaw we were led to believe from all that transpired — to use that much abused word in its proper sense — that the conversations on all the matters involved were highly satisfactory. Therefore, I will not have it said and put into currency that Poland is the obstacle to agreement with Britain, France and Russia.

Nor is the introduction of the Baltic States an obstacle either to Poland or to Russia. On the contrary, these Baltic

States, united together by the closest military agreement, are also in the closest touch with Poland. There is harmony there. The vital interests of Poland would be affected by the subjugation to the Nazi Power of the three Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The same is true of Russia. There is an identity of interests in respect of these States. Are we to be told that we shall increase our responsibilities by guaranteeing these Baltic States as well? You will not extend your responsibilities, or your burdens, by extending your guarantees to cover all these countries, at the point at which you have now got, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. You are in it up to the neck already, and the question is how to make your system effective, and effective in time. I should have thought that at the point at which we have now reached, there is safety in numbers, and there may be even peace in numbers, provided that every State that is admitted makes its fair contribution and shows itself earnestly resolved to take all measures to maintain its independence. Therefore, it seems to me that there is no reasonable objection on the ground of the attitude of Poland, and no reasonable objection on the ground of our having to give a guarantee or being involved in the fate of the Baltic States. These are not valid reasons in themselves for not going forward with this alliance with the Soviet.

But there are other countries of which we have heard. Take the case of Italy. It has been said: Do not irritate Signor Mussolini by making an alliance in time of peace with the Russian Soviet Government, just as he may be coming round, when he may be going to show some expectation of a change of policy. If the Prime Minister desires to influence Signor Mussolini, let me assure him that there is one way, and one way only, in which you can do it, and that is to be strong: nothing else will have any effect. If we are able to convince Signor Mussolini that Great Britain is strong, is arming herself, is united with the French Republic and bound together with other countries and has the whole power of Russia at her disposal, you will have the best chance of Signor Mussolini bracing himself for the great effort which may be required of him to liberate his own country from foreign thralldom.

There is the question of General Franco — that General Franco, also, may be coming round, and that we must not put him off. All we ask of General Franco is that he shall be neutral and rebuild the ruins of his country, and make a profit, as Spain did in the last War, from both sides. That is the only source from which they are likely to gain at the present. Can anyone doubt that that is the Spanish interest and the desire of General Franco? Yet if there is a different policy pursued in Spain, it is not because General Franco desires it but because there are forces and intrigues on the part of the Nazi and Fascist Powers. The way to counteract these forces of intrigue is to be strong, and the united strength of all peace-seeking nations would, as the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) has said, be overwhelming and would have a deterrent effect.

There is one other country, and that is Portugal, our ancient ally, with whom we have the oldest alliance in the world, the famous Anglo-Portuguese Treaty. Will they, it is said, not be rendered uneasy if they see their British ally also an ally of the Soviet Republic? I think it should be easy to remove such anxieties, because obviously if we are allies of the Russian Soviet Government they will not molest our allies by any intrigues or Communist propaganda. It will be quite easy to insist upon that as an element in the co-operation of our alliance. What is taking place in France to-day? Some time ago I was at Metz and the general there informed me that there were no more loyal and serviceable soldiers under his command than the Communists. Why is that? It is not because they care about France, but because they care about resistance to Nazi domination. What does it matter what the motive is as long as the action is effective and trustworthy? Motive is a matter for the individual himself. Therefore, it seems to me that it would be a great assurance to the Portuguese Government and people that they would not be disturbed by internal intrigues from the Comintern. An alliance with Russia would be an actual guarantee in the interests of Portugal rather than the contrary. At any rate, you will do far better if you have an opportunity of speaking to Russia as an ally than if you

have the conditions of distrust and mutual suspicion which prevail at the present time.

There is only one more point I want to make, and I must make it if the House will bear with me. It is what I may call the technical military aspect of the defense of Poland. His Majesty's Government have given a guarantee to Poland. I was astounded when I heard them give this guarantee. I support it, but I was astounded by it, because nothing that had happened before led one to suppose that such a step would be taken. I want to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the question posed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member of the Carnarvon Boroughs ten days ago, and repeated today has not been answered. The question was whether the General Staff was consulted before this guarantee was given as to whether it was safe and practical to give it, and whether there were any means of implementing it. The whole country knows that the question has been asked, and it has not been answered. That is disconcerting and disquieting, because obviously if it could have been answered it would have been, as promptly as the point was answered about giving 5,000,000 pounds of Czech money back to Germany. I had hoped that it would be answered, but it was not, because it could not be answered in any satisfactory form.

If there had been a careful military examination of this problem, I think it would have been seen at the very outset that no great influx of Russian troops into Poland for the purposes for the defense of Poland is practically possible. The roads and the railroads, of which the gauges change at the Russo-Polish frontier, would not enable any large Russian army to come into action on the Western borders of Poland. Moreover, it is not necessary, for the Poles have a very large army; they do not lack brave men to defend their native land and their regained independence. What they need is not men: they need munitions. That is what I want to impress upon the Committee. That is what we shall all need should a war come — not only Poland and Great Britain, but all the countries engaged in it. In the last War, the fighting was very intense for two months or more, and then suddenly it stopped,

not only because of the winter, but because both sides had fired their ammunition. There had to be a breathing-space. There will not be any breathing-space in the next war. Once the German bombardment is begun, it will continue for many months without the slightest slackening. This country and its allies must be equally able to maintain themselves, and that is where the aid of Russia to Poland is going to be absolutely vital, in airplanes, tanks, artillery, ammunition and equipment. This ought to be studied and thought out. It is not a question of bringing in great masses of Russian troops, but of giving aid in the form in which it is needed and in the form in which I have every reason to believe Russia would give it in practice, provided that, on these broad lines, a triple alliance were set up. That is why M. Potemkin's conversations were satisfactory.

Clearly, Russia is not going to enter into agreements unless she is treated as an equal, and not only treated as an equal, but has confidence that the methods employed by the allies — by the peace front — are such as would be likely to lead to success. No one wants to associate themselves with indeterminate leadership and uncertain policies. The Government must realize that none of these States in Eastern Europe can maintain themselves for, say, a year's war unless they have behind them the massive, solid backing of a friendly Russia, joined to the combination of the Western Powers. I do not agree altogether with the very dark colors with which my right hon. Friend invested his picture in order to bring out his points, but, in the main, I agree with him that if there is to be an effective Eastern front — an Eastern peace front, or a war front as it might become — it can be set up only with the effective support of a friendly Soviet Russia lying behind all those countries.

Unless there is an Eastern front set up, what is going to happen to the West? What is going to happen to those countries on the Western front to whom, if we had not given guarantees, it is admitted we are bound — countries like Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Switzerland? What is going to happen to those countries? How are they to be defended if there is no Eastern front in activity? Let us look back to the experiences



we had in 1917. In 1917, the Russian front was broken and demoralized. Revolution and mutiny had sapped the courage of that great disciplined army, and the conditions at the front were indescribable; and yet, until the Treaty was made closing the front down, more than 1,500,000 Germans were held upon that front, even in its most ineffectual and unhappy condition. Once that front was closed down, 1,000,000 Germans and 5,000 cannon were brought to the West, and almost at the last moment turned the course of the War and forced upon us a disastrous peace.

It is a tremendous thing this question of the Eastern front. I am astonished that there is not more anxiety about it. Certainly, I do not ask favors of Soviet Russia. This is no time to ask favors of countries. But here is an offer, a fair offer, and a better offer, in my opinion, than the terms which the Government seek to get for themselves; a more simple, a more direct and a more effective offer. Let it not be put aside and come to nothing. I beg His Majesty's Government to get some of these brutal truths into their heads. Without any effective Eastern front, there can be no satisfactory defense of our interests in the West, and without Russia there can be no effective Eastern front. If His Majesty's Government, having neglected our defenses for a long time, having thrown away Czechoslovakia with all that Czechoslovakia meant in military power, having committed us without examination of the technical aspects to the defense of Poland and Rumania, now reject and cast away the indispensable aid of Russia, and so lead us in the worst of all ways into the worst of all wars, they will have ill-deserved the confidence and, I will add, the generosity with which they have been treated by their fellow-countrymen.

MR. RAIKES (C.): . . . The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) ran very speedily over a list of the countries which might object to a direct military alliance with Russia and rather waved them aside, as if there was nothing in that objection. But I would detain the Committee for a few minutes by a consideration of the actual position of

certain of those countries. First, take the case of Poland. Poland at the end of the War escaped from the thrall of Austria, Germany and Russia, and there is probably no doubt about the fact that the Poles who had been under Russian domination since the Partitions, had suffered the hardest fate of the three sections of Poles. Poland, after it had become an independent state, defeated the Russian armies at the very gates of Warsaw in 1920. Poland has, since then, set up what is, in fact, not a democratic State, but a dictatorship, and as the history of the last 18 years shows, the Polish Government all along has been afraid of penetration by the Soviet. They have been afraid of the importation of Soviet ideas from Russia into Poland. That, indeed, may well be one of the reasons why the Ukraine, under Poland, has been kept under such tight control by the Polish majority Government. They fear a new Ukraine under the Soviet containing a Polish minority. Fear of Russia has inspired all the actions of Poland for 18 years. Today you have a non-aggression pact between Rumania and Poland to fight for one another in the event of aggression by Russia. To this day you have no pact signed by Rumania and Poland that they will fight as a common front against the advance of Germany. Until such a pact is signed I do not think it is unfair to infer that the fear of Russia, the fear of Soviet infiltration into what you can call a capitalist State, is greater, even than the fear of Germany. . . .

MR. EDEN (C.): . . . I have no desire to enter into arguments as to the merits or otherwise of the methods of government employed in Russia or anywhere else, nor is it indeed necessary or relevant to the decision which we have to take, but I think we should all agree on this, that Russia has, in relation to the Western Powers, in her internal economy and the condition of her people much leeway to make up. I do not believe that those at present in power in Russia would in any way dispute that. Certainly the impression that I formed, when I had contact with them four years ago, was that they were just as alive to the tasks that confronted them inside Russia as we could be to the tasks that confront us here in this country.

That was the impression that I formed, and I think the Committee might well bear this in mind, that war, should it break out, would hamper and probably destroy the great experiment, because whatever view you take it is a great experiment, which is going on inside Soviet Russia at this time.

It would not help Russia at all. I can imagine no country which has less to gain from war. She does not want any more territory; she has more than enough. The problem is not a problem of space for her, it is a problem of development; and it cannot be economic causes, which we so often hear are what drive nations to war, because Russia's economic resources are virtually limitless. Again what she requires first is the opportunity to develop them, and so I say that there is every advantage, so far as Anglo-Russian relations are concerned, in giving political expression to what is a geographical and economic fact. If that be desirable from the narrower basis of Anglo-Russian relations, it is surely even more essential from the point of view of European peace. What is the object of this policy upon which the Government are now engaged? It is not to win a war, but to avert a war. Surely it must follow that the stronger the organization you create, the greater its power as a deterrent to any would-be aggressor State, and, equally important, the greater its appeal to the peoples everywhere, whatever the attitude of their Government. I say that there is every advantage from the point of view of European peace in making this arrangement as complete and thorough as possible.

Let me turn to the purely strategic aspect of this question, which is of importance and the House should discuss it. We have undertaken commitments to go to the help of Poland and Rumania. There can be no question of turning back from that. The whole House and the nation supported the Government in giving these commitments. If we were ready to undertake them it is inconceivable that we should not be anxious now to build up the peace structure as a whole in Eastern Europe. To us a military metaphor, what we seem to have done is to occupy an outpost line in Eastern Europe. It is essential that we should consolidate the main front behind that line. I assume

that the Government share this view. I can hardly believe, unless they did share it, that they would have undertaken these tremendous obligations. If you are going to build a deterrent it is folly not to build the most powerful deterrent in your power. The Prime Minister, speaking at the Albert Hall the other day, spoke of a conversation with M. Blum, in which M. Blum said that in his judgment the greatest danger of an outbreak of war was that there should still be doubts in the minds of certain governments — we may as well name them, Germany and Italy — as to our seriousness of purpose. I entirely agree with M. Blum. This country can certainly not carry conviction more effectively in the minds of these two Governments than by two steps — compulsory National Service on the one hand, and an arrangement with Russia on the other. I cannot help regretting that any other impression should have got abroad. I really do not think it is the fault of Members of this House; we have been very patient and have not pressed the Government with questions about the Russian negotiations, but have had to get all our information from the newspapers. We think now that it is not unreasonable to ask for further clarification than we have had today.

I want to say a word or two upon the other aspects of this question, the aspect of machinery and how this arrangement is to be carried out. What I should wish to see is that the basis of arrangement should be a tripartite alliance between this country, France and Russia based on complete reciprocity; that is to say, that if Russia were attacked we and France should go to her help, and if we or France were attacked Russia would come to our aid. Then, if any other nations of Europe were victims of aggression and called for help, we should make it clear that we would be prepared, all three of us, to give that help at once and to the fullest extent of our resources. That is the instrument which I conceive, and I really cannot understand why an arrangement of that kind should be thought to run counter to the peace front. After all, France has already her own arrangements with Soviet Russia. No one thinks that they run counter to the peace front. We have our arrangements with France and Belgium, and no one thinks that they run

counter to the peace front. There are a number of these arrangements. There is our arrangement with Turkey, in which France would be associated. Why should it be part of the peace front to come to an arrangement with Turkey and not part of the peace front to do the same with Russia?

The argument that has to be met is the argument about other Powers, and here I come to the question of diplomatic machinery. If we make a tripartite arrangement between three great powers it could certainly be so drafted as to make it plain that it would not come into operation in respect of Russia's neighbors or in respect of anybody else except with their consent or at their invitation. I refuse to accept that it is impossible to draft an arrangement of that kind. When I am told that the difference between our proposals, as far as I can understand them from the Press and from what we have been told, and the Russian proposals is that we allow for the position of these other countries and the Russian proposals do not, I am bound to say that I do not agree. As far as I can follow from what has been told us in the Press, the Russian proposals make exactly as much allowance for the position of fourth parties as ours. In fact the arrangement we are proposing to Russia is concerned exclusively with Russia's immediate neighbors. We could have a form of arrangement which would cover Europe as a whole and which, therefore, would be much less invidious to Russia's neighbors. I press this again on my right hon. Friend. He knows it is not for the first time. I believe arrangements can be come to which cover the three great Powers, and which are operative for Powers other than those if they desire it and if they ask for that help. On that basis I really cannot understand why we should hesitate to come to an arrangement.

SIR A. SINCLAIR (L.): ...I wish I could convey to the Committee the impression of blank astonishment and deep disappointment which is felt abroad by men of all parties, by all friends of peace and justice, at the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards Russia. We have had this afternoon from the Prime Minister no defense of His Majesty's Government's refusal to accept the Russian proposal; the Prime Minister

preferred not to explain the reasons. Still less have we had any explanation of His Majesty's Government's still more indefensible refusal to accept another alternative, the plan which has been put to them by the French Government. Although they have been very sparing in an explanation of their refusal to accept the Russian Government's offer I know many of the pretexts which have been put forward by the Government to explain their attitude. I was glad to hear the Prime Minister brush aside the arguments derived from the alleged inefficiency of the Russian forces. I remember in 1914 how Generals Rennenkam and Sazanov,\* hating each other much more than they hated any enemy general, lurched into East Prussia and mopped up a few German troops until the Germans under Hindenburg and Ludendorff swept these heroic and ill-equipped soldiers headlong in confusion across the Russian frontier. But that blundering but heroic enterprise saved Paris.

While it is true that you require a great deal of skill and equipment for the capture of a great fortress, or indeed for breaking into somebody's house, what you require for keeping a door shut when somebody is trying to get through it is merely bulk and weight. That is why Russia would be so useful to the cause of peace at the present time. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping was well justified in saying that, among the ridiculous pretexts that have been used by His Majesty's Government to defend their refusal to accept the Russian offer, is the possibility of offending Portugal. The 300 years old alliance between Great Britain and Portugal, two proud and independent nations of equal status, is firmly based on common interests. If foreign policy is not to be dictated by ideological prejudices, as the Prime Minister claims, surely we cannot allow the ideological prejudices of even so valued an ally as Portugal to prevent us from obtaining such a vital buttress for peace in Eastern Europe as Russia would provide.

An even feebler argument is that an alliance with Russia would throw Spain and Italy into the arms of Germany. Why, they are there already. We do not need to trouble about that.

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\* Should be: Rennenkamf and Samsonov.

I understand that the Government have been using even such an argument as the effect on opinion in Canada. I cannot believe that that is an argument which can be seriously treated when we are considering the imminent threat to peace here at our own doors in Europe. Moreover, let us remember that Herr Hitler is eagerly watching these negotiations. I hope, that every hon. Member has read the dispatch which appeared in "The Times" of March 15 from their Berlin correspondent, who said:

*"It would not be admitted here" (that is, in Berlin) "that an Anglo-Russian alliance would mean the end of German successes in the field of foreign policy. At the least, however, it would be a substantial hindrance, and not a few observers here believe that if the current Anglo-Russian negotiations were to break down, there would be considerable pressure on Herr Hitler, on the side especially of the Army, to make such arrangements with Russia as would preclude any danger of England's receiving a second chance."*

If there is any doubt about the efficiency of the Russian army now, the right hon. Gentleman need have no doubt about its efficiency if it were taken over by German staff officers. If we want the friendship and active military help of a great country like Russia, we must not treat her as a convenience, as a country we can call in to help us when we and the countries in whose welfare and independence we are most concerned are in danger. We must treat her as an equal partner in resistance to aggression, and if we welcome her soldiers to the battlefield we must not, as we did at Munich, exclude her statesmen from the council chamber. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister said that there must be reciprocity, and that the Government's proposals meant complete reciprocity. The Prime Minister did not deal with this case. Suppose that we went to the help of Holland if she were threatened by an act of aggression from Germany. Poland would be bound to come to our help by our reciprocal guarantee, Russia, by the Government's proposals, would be bound to come to the help of Poland. But if Lithuania,

Estonia or Latvia were threatened by aggression from Germany, Russia would have to help them, but we would not be under any obligation to help Russia. Therefore, there is not, in fact, reciprocity.

The British offer did not cover the Baltic States. I am not going to deal any further with the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping in regard to that. I think it is a cast-iron argument. It is absolutely essential that we should protect the Northern flank of the peace front in Eastern Europe by ensuring that the Baltic States are not overrun. There is no time to be lost, and I beg the Government, if it is not already too late — for their attitude has enormously increased the difficulties of reaching agreement with Russia — to accept the plan of the French Government which would almost certainly have been acceptable to Russia ten days or a fortnight ago, though I cannot confidently say that it would be acceptable to Russia now. I hope that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen saw a dispatch in the "Times" from its very well-informed correspondent in Paris yesterday. He says:

*"It is worth recalling that soon after the negotiations began, the French Government proposed intermediate suggestions of their own and that these, though shelved after their initial consideration in London, are still being held in reserve at the Quai d'Orsay in case the moment may arrive for their re-presentation with a better chance of success."*

I hope that those plans will be taken up by the Government. With astonishing loyalty, the French Government have supported His Majesty's Government in putting forward inadequate proposals. I venture to predict that it will put a strain upon the close collaboration which, happily, now exists between French and British Governments, unless His Majesty's Government before it is too late, if it be not already too late, repay that loyalty by accepting the French proposals for an accord between the three countries which would pledge them jointly to collective resistance to any act of aggression in either Eastern or Western Europe, and to which accord effect could imme-



diately be given by staff conversations. I do not know whether their military advisers have told the Government that we would win a war without Russia. But I am certain of this, that we cannot preserve peace without Russia. Nothing but the clearest evidence that the might of Russia will be engaged against aggression will give the necessary encouragement to Turkey and other countries to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the front against aggression, will convince the German and Italian peoples that aggression would inevitably mean disaster for them, and would certainly deter the war parties in Germany and Italy from plunging Europe into war.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: (MR. BUTLER): . . . Now let me come to the point to which the attention of the Committee has been principally directed this afternoon, and that is the negotiations with the Soviet Government. The right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) — and I must say how honored I am to cross swords with so many distinguished speakers this afternoon — said that it was action and not motives that mattered, and he went on to say that motives were matters for the individual conscience. The view of His Majesty's Government is that motive is always of first importance in the conduct of foreign policy. Rather than take any hurried or hasty action, we should in this Committee consider dispassionately the motives which rule us at the present time in framing British policy. Perhaps the Committee will be patient with me if I try to define those motives. The object of His Majesty's Government has been twofold. We have been anxious to create a sense of security and to establish a guarantee of independence from the earliest moment in those regions where potential threats have been most imminent. We desire, in fact, to give early support in those quarters where it appears to be most urgently required. Then we wish to secure the maximum amount of collaboration for this purpose. We hope — and this is important — that assistance will be forthcoming from States which are willing to offer it and that it will be made available to States who are willing to receive it. In this connection let me tell the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, in answer to his question whether the General Staff were

consulted about recent guarantees, that His Majesty's Government keep in continuous consultation with the General Staff, and the right hon. Gentleman may rest assured that any action that we have taken has been in consultation with that body.

The governing purpose of this policy which I have described is in no sense a desire to threaten or encircle or hamper the legitimate activities of any other State, nor to organize any group of Powers against any other group of Powers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington said that our object was not to win a war but to avert a war, and that exactly describes the policy of His Majesty's Government. When I say that it is not our policy to organize one group of Powers against another group of Powers, I might well remind the Committee that the results of such an action might conceivably be — and this is a point which has not yet been put — to bring war nearer rather than to push it further away. Our sole objective has been to establish confidence in Europe, so that all States, great and small, may pursue their lawful purpose without disturbance and without fear that their independence will be menaced from any quarter. In order to achieve this object interchanges have taken place with the Soviet Government and they have been described by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister today. In their latest communication received a few days ago, on which certain negotiations have been proceeding since, the Soviet Government explain the reasons why they prefer the suggestion that they have made. We have said that the procedure, which has already been indicated to the Committee, of our policy seems better suited to the circumstances of the moment and to the objects we have in view, which I described earlier.

Though our plan is less comprehensive than a military alliance, we believe it better designed to give effective support where support is most needed. It is also, we think, more in harmony with the views of other Governments most nearly concerned and less calculated to raise doubts and difficulties in their minds. I have been pressed to state the views of some of those other States. It is difficult for me to give an account of individual views, but let me take a point which was made le-

gitimately in a constructive way by the right. hon Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington. He said that he proposed a plan which he thought could be successfully put into operation with the consent of the other Powers concerned. That is a point we shall certainly bear in mind, and he and the Committee may take it as certain that we shall continue to keep closely in touch with the other Powers concerned. While I cannot specify the views of individual States, let me take, for example, those who live in a part of Europe in between great Powers. There must be on their part, looking at it simply from the point of view of commonsense, a natural hesitation before a decision for any definite association with one of those great Powers is taken by one of those States. If there is hesitation in a State living in a geographical position of that sort, there is also similar hesitation of decision for His Majesty's Government. The hon. and gallant Member for Bournemouth (Sir H. Croft) said that to make a military alliance of this tripartite character would be a big departure in British policy, and he is perfectly right, and that is why the Government are approaching this matter with caution and giving proper time to the consideration of such an important subject. We are giving careful and sympathetic consideration to the suggestions and criticisms of the Soviet Government —

SIR A. SINCLAIR: And the French Government?

MR. BUTLER: Yes — and my Noble Friend is concerting and will concert with the Soviet Ambassador, to whose work a tribute should be paid, in an attempt to reconcile the points of view of the two Governments. In this attempt His Majesty's Government have been happy to avail themselves of the collaboration and counsel of the French Government. Our original suggestion has already been modified with a view to meeting the preoccupations of the Soviet Government and negotiations are continuing. I cannot, therefore, accept the phrase of the right hon. Member for Epping when he said he feared that we were rejecting and casting away the Soviet Government. We are doing no such thing. I was asked by the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) whether we desired an understanding. I can naturally say that the answer to that

is in the affirmative. Our object remains that we should not range one group of nations against another group. On the contrary, we seek conditions of security in which the differences which must inevitably arise between nations may be all adjusted by free negotiation and not by force, and that we should, in fact, seek to avert war and not by any of our actions, hasty or otherwise, tend to bring it nearer.

## 17. ANGLO-POLISH COAL AGREEMENT (MAY 23, 1939)\*

**T**HE FIRST NEGOTIATIONS *between Poland and Great Britain on the question of export-coal markets were begun in 1928. In 1932 a coal agreement was signed; during the next few years this agreement was renewed each time the period of its validity expired, always adapting it to the international situation of world coal markets. Just before the outbreak of the war in 1939 the two Governments again began negotiations for the renewal of the agreement.*

MR. JAMES GRIFFITHS (Lab.) asked the Secretary for Mines whether he can make a statement on the recent discussions with representatives of Poland on the Anglo-Polish coal agreement.

MR. LLOYD: At the invitation of His Majesty's Government, Monsieur Rose, the Polish Vice-Minister of Commerce and Industry, visited London last week to discuss with me the position of the British and Polish coal industries in the export market. I am glad to be able to inform the House that during these conversations the two Governments found themselves in agreement that the collaboration of the two industries, the object of which has been to eliminate competition between them, should be maintained, and that the existing coal trade agreement between the two industries should be continued, subject

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 2061-2062

to such modification as might be necessary in view of recent political changes in Central Europe. We, therefore, agreed to recommend that there should be further consultations between the representatives of both industries at an early date.

## 18. GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA (MAY 24, 1939)\*

MR. V. ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he is now in a position to make a further statement about the progress of negotiations for the strategic co-operation of France, Russia, and Great Britain in resistance to aggression.

MR. THORNE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can now say whether a tripartite agreement between England, France and Russia has yet been settled and whether the agreement is similar to the agreement between France and Russia.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Perhaps the hon. Members will be good enough to await the statement which I propose to make at the end of questions.

*Later —*

THE PRIME MINISTER: The House is aware that my Noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was able to have conversations with the French Ministers in Paris on his way to Geneva. He was also able to continue in Geneva the conversations which had been conducted with the Soviet Ambassador in London. As a result of these conversations all relevant points of view have now been made clear, and I have every reason to hope that as a result of proposals which His Majesty's Government are now in a position to make on the main questions arising, it will be found possible to reach full agreement at an early date. There still remain some further points to be cleared up, but I do not anticipate that these are likely to give rise to any serious difficulty.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 2267-2268

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) : Will it be possible to make a more definite and fuller statement before the House rises for Whitsun?

THE PRIME MINISTER: If it is possible, of course, such a statement will be made, but, as I mentioned, there are some points which have still to be cleared up. I think probably it will be necessary to wait until after we come back, when I hope it will be possible to give a complete account of the agreement which, I trust, will by then have been reached.

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : Is it not most urgent, in view of the continuing dangers of the international situation, to make an end of these delays?

MR. V. ADAMS: Is my right hon. Friend aware that this step towards this massive deterrent against aggression will give throughout the country the most wide-spread relief, satisfaction and hope?

## 19. DANZIG

(MAY 24, 1939) \*

**O**N JULY 4, 1936 a Committee of Three was appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to follow the developments in Danzig. This Committee was composed of a representative each from Great Britain, France, and Portugal.

On May 21, 1939, a group of S. A. troops in Kalthof (situated in the territory of the Free City of Danzig) attacked the house occupied by officers of the Polish Customs Service, destroying the house and the furniture. Hearing of this incident the deputy of the Polish High Commissioner in Danzig asked the Danzig authorities for the assistance of the Danzig police. Upon being refused he hurried by car to the scene of the incident. While he was looking over the destroyed house, several men attacked his driver who had been left behind in the car. In self-defence, the driver shot twice into the air, but in view of

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 2268-2269.

*the growing hostility of the aggressors, he then shot into them. One of these attackers, a man named Gruebnau from Marienburg (East Prussia), was killed.*

MR. DAY (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will give particulars of all reports made by the High Commissioner in Danzig to the Council of the League of Nations to the effect that difficulties are being placed in his way in carrying out his duties.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The High Commissioner has reported regularly to the Committee of Three appointed by the Council to follow the situation in Danzig and the Committee has authorized the issue of communiques at the conclusion of its meetings held at Geneva during the sessions of the Council. I am not, of course, in a position to add to these communiques, but I cannot agree that the general purport of the High Commissioner's reports is as described by the hon. Member.

MR. DAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the High Commissioner has reported any interference with postal or telephone facilities?

THE PRIME MINISTER: No, Sir, I cannot.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): Is it not a fact that the British Consul has been on leave for some time? . . .

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make a statement on the present position in Danzig.

THE PRIME MINISTER: According to reports received by my Noble Friend, demonstrations were made on May 21 against a Polish Customs House at Kalthof within Danzig territory on the East Prussian border. There is a conflict of evidence as to the nature and the results of these demonstrations. The Polish Commissioner General in Danzig sent representatives to investigate the affair, and, in circumstances, of which the accounts also differ very widely, a Danzig citizen was killed. Formal protests have been made on both sides, but I trust that these incidents will not be permitted to lead to graver complications.

## 20. LEAGUE OF NATIONS

(MAY 24, 1939) \*

MR MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether, at the present session of the League of Nations Council, the British Government propose to report recent measures taken to secure the peace of Europe with Poland, Rumania, Greece, and Turkey with a view to their recognition as a contribution to the collective security contemplated under the Covenant.

THE PRIME MINISTER: My Noble Friend made a statement to the Council of the League of Nations yesterday, as follows:

*Text of statement by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Council of League of Nations. May 23rd.*

*I have asked permission to make a short statement on the general political situation because I desired to explain briefly the view which His Majesty's Government take of recent events in Europe and of their future attitude to the League of Nations.*

*The changes which have taken place in Europe since last September are present to all our minds. It is not necessary for the representative of His Majesty's Government to restate their attitude towards these events, nor is this the occasion to discuss them in detail.*

*But they have imposed upon His Majesty's Government a certain course of action, on which I ought to say a word or two. We have in consequence of what has passed felt obliged to undertake certain obligations of a particular character directed towards specific and well-defined ends. One principle is common to all these obligations that we have assumed; namely, resistance to the*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 347, p. 2303-2304.



*imposition of solutions by the method of force, which if continued, must result in reducing civilization to anarchy and destruction.*

*The particular action which His Majesty's Government have taken has not been carried out through the League. This was in the circumstances impossible. But everything that His Majesty's Government have done is in strict conformity with the spirit of the League Covenant. The negotiations on which His Majesty's Government are engaged are not yet completed. When they are, His Majesty's Government will propose to take an appropriate opportunity for communicating their result to the League.*

*This is not the occasion of detailed discussion of the events to which I have alluded, but there will, I think, be general agreement that they have inevitably affected the political influence and activity of the League. It could not be otherwise, and we should be less than frank with ourselves and with the world if we refused to acknowledge the fact. But I should like to make it clear that His Majesty's Government hold no less strongly than they have ever done to the ideals of international collaboration of which the League has been and is the symbol. I am glad to think that many nations who are not members of the League are still fully alive to the great value of all the work that is done for the welfare of humanity through the labor, health, social or other technical organizations of the League. Moreover, the great end and purpose, in loyalty to which the League was founded, and to which it has sought to give expression, transcends any organization or outward form. That purpose can never fade or die, whatever may be the practical methods adopted for giving to it at any particular moment practical expression. All members of the League will look forward to the day when all nations may be able and willing to work together in the ways of peace for the common good of all. His Majesty's Government will in the meantime so far as possible frame their policy, not only to defend our pres-*

*ent order against forcible disruption, but more positively to revive those elements on which the re-establishment of international co-operation in a comprehensive, vigorous and practical form depends.*

21. GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE AND RUSSIA.  
BALTIC STATES REFUSE BRITISH GUARANTEES.  
(JUNE 7, 1939)\*

ON MAY 31, 1939, Foreign Commissar Molotov stated his terms for a defensive alliance with Britain: an effective pact of mutual assistance against aggression, a guarantee against aggression to be given to the states of Central and Eastern Europe, and a concrete military agreement to be concluded by the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and France. Concealed in these terms were Russia's real demands from Great Britain and France. The more important of these demands were: annulment of the alliance between Poland and Rumania; transformation of the existing pact of non-aggression between Poland and Russia to a new and more definite political agreement, including the right of the Soviets to send their troops into Polish territory; recognition of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia as being in the Russian zone of defense and permitting Russia a free hand in them. This resulted in a serious political situation which needed the special attention of His Majesty's Government. For this reason the British Government decided to send a representative of the Foreign Office to Moscow to inform Ambassador William Seeds of the Government's attitude.

*In the course of talks with the Baltic States it was made clear that Latvia, Estonia, and Finland wanted to observe strict neutrality and did not wish to receive a "guarantee" which, they felt, would make them dependent on Russia.*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 348, p. 400-402.

MR. VYVYAN ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will now state the result of the examination of the most recent Russian note respecting a Russo-Franco-British alliance.

THE PRIME MINISTER: For reasons which the House will appreciate, it has not been possible to give day-to-day information as to the progress of the negotiations for an agreement between Great Britain, France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A stage has, however, not been reached which enables me to supplement the statement which I made on May 24.\*

It appears from the last exchange of views with the Soviet Government that there is general agreement as to the main objects to be attained. His Majesty's Government have, I think, been able to satisfy the Soviet Government that they are, in fact, prepared to conclude an agreement on the basis of full reciprocity. They have also made it clear that they are ready, immediately and without any reserve, to join with the French Government in giving the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics full military support in the event of any act of aggression against her involving her in hostilities with a European Power. It is not intended that the military support which the three Powers would agree to extend to one another should be confined to a case of actual aggression upon their own territory. It is possible to imagine various cases in which any one of the three Governments might feel that its security was indirectly menaced by the action of another European Power. These cases have been reviewed in detail, and I hope that it may be possible now to suggest a formula acceptable to the three Governments which, while having regard to the rights and interests of other States, will assure co-operation between those Powers in resistance to aggression.

There remain one or two difficulties to be resolved, in particular the position of certain States, which do not want to receive a guarantee on the ground that it would compromise the strict neutrality which they desire to preserve. It is mani-

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\* See No. 18.

festly impossible to impose a guarantee on States which do not desire it, but I hope that some means may be found by which this difficulty, and any others which may arise in the adjustment of the general points on which there is now no difference between the three Governments, shall not stand in the way of giving the greatest effect to the principle of mutual support against aggression.

In order to accelerate the negotiations, it has been decided to send a representative of the Foreign Office to Moscow to convey to His Majesty's Ambassador there full information as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government on all outstanding points. I hope that by this method it will be possible more rapidly to complete the discussion that is still necessary to harmonize the views of the three Governments and to reach final agreement.

MR. ADAMS: Might I be allowed to thank the Prime Minister for that full statement and also to ask him whether it is not true to say that the final success of these negotiations will make defeat completely impossible and war itself unlikely?

MR. GREENWOOD (Lab.): Will the Prime Minister explain who is likely to go to Moscow and whether that visit will hinder the rapid conclusion of agreement on the principles of the treaty; whether the principles of the treaty cannot be settled by the Governments and only subsidiary matters left to be settled in Moscow?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I cannot say at the present time who will be the representative of the Foreign Office, because that is still under consideration.

MR. ELLIS SMITH (Lab.): Could not it be a Minister?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The object of sending a representative of the Foreign Office to Moscow is to facilitate and accelerate the negotiations, and not to delay them. I have every hope that that may be the result.

MR. GREENWOOD: Is it not possible that a visit to Moscow might be interpreted as a delaying operation against the full completion of the treaty? While the principle might be agreed to now, could not the details be settled afterwards?

THE PRIME MINISTER: We are not in a position actually to

conclude a treaty now, because of the points I have mentioned which are still to be resolved. It is in the hope of resolving them rapidly that this visit is to take place.

MR. V. ADAMS: Can the Prime Minister say when the mission will go to Moscow?

THE PRIME MINISTER: At once.

MR. MANDER (L.): Will the proposed agreement include an arrangement for immediate staff conversations?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think we had better wait until we reach an agreement.

MR. SANDYS (C.): Is the Prime Minister aware that his hopeful statement will be received as evidence of the Government's determination to reach this agreement as quickly as possible?

MR. COCKS (Lab.): Will the representative be a member of the Government or a civil servant?

THE PRIME MINISTER: A civil servant.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER FLETCHER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister, with reference to the Anglo-Franco-Russian negotiations, whether His Majesty's Government have received any communication from the Government of the Baltic States indicating their wish to be guaranteed, or, on the contrary, not to be guaranteed.

THE PRIME MINISTER: His Majesty's Government have received several communications from the Finnish, Estonian and Latvian Governments indicating that, in view of their intention to maintain strict neutrality, they did not wish to receive a guarantee as a result of the present negotiations between Great Britain, France and Russia.

22. GUARANTEES TO POLAND. TALKS  
WITH RUSSIA.  
(JUNE 8, 1939) \*

ON JUNE 8, 1939, *the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Viscount Halifax made a statement to the House of Lords about guaranteeing agreements concluded with Poland, Rumania and Greece, and the agreement with Turkey. He also gave an account on the progress of diplomatic talks with Russia.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX): . . .As regards Poland, the House will recall the declaration made in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister in agreement with the Polish Foreign Minister on April 6. By that declaration the assurance given by His Majesty's Government to Poland was made reciprocal pending the conclusion of a permanent Agreement between the two countries. It is my hope that this permanent Agreement will shortly be concluded. Our assurances to Rumania and Greece, as the House knows, are unilateral in form, and at present require no further definition. These assurances, as the House will remember, will operate, as in the case of Poland, if there should be a clear threat to the independence of Rumania or of Greece which the Rumanian or Greek Government respectively consider it vital to resist with their national forces. As regards Turkey, the first stage of the negotiations with the Turkish Government was brought to a successful issue just a month ago, on May 12, and your Lordships will recollect the declaration that was made by both Governments in regard to the Agreement then reached. The further consultations for which that declaration

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 113, p. 354-356, 368.

provided are being actively pursued, and I have very little doubt that before long I shall be able to announce to your Lordships' House that they have been successfully completed. The attitude of friendly cooperation which the Turkish Government has adopted throughout these discussions has been a source of the greatest satisfaction to His Majesty's Government, as it has been to the whole country, and I think it is the best augury for the consolidation of peace in the Mediterranean area and South Eastern Europe.

Now I come to the negotiations with the Soviet Union on which the noble Lord opposite spoke. Since the statement that was made by my right honorable friend the Prime Minister in another place some little time ago, I have had the advantage of personal discussions with the French Ministers in Paris and at Geneva, as well as the continuance of my conversations with the Russian Ambassador in London. As a result of these discussions, joint Anglo-French proposals were made to the Soviet Government which, in our view, met in all essentials the points on which there had been difficulty. The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in a public comment on these proposals, has indeed recognized that they do in substance go far to meet the preoccupation of his Government. But there remain one or two difficulties to be resolved, and your Lordships will be aware of the statement on the position as it stands today made by my right honorable friend in another place yesterday.

The main point of difficulty is the position of the Baltic States. Throughout all these discussions His Majesty's Government have been guided by the desire, not only to take account of the particular circumstances of the Government with which they were negotiating, but also to have regard to the situation and the wishes of third countries; and we have never attempted, and we would not think it right to attempt, to thrust assurances on countries which did not want them, or to take any step which might compromise in other quarters the relations of those countries which only desire to maintain their own neutrality inviolate. While your Lordships, I am sure, would give full weight to that consideration, at the same

time, of course, it must be recognized that from the point of view of their own security the Soviet Government cannot be disinterested in the independence of their neighbors, and I hope that we may be able to find means by which that difficulty, and any others which may arise in the adjustment of the general points on which there is now, I think, no difference between the three Governments, will be resolved, and therefore the greatest effect given to the general principle of mutual support against aggression by which the agreement we seek to reach is inspired...

LORD PHILLIMORE: . . . Fortunately or unfortunately, the position of the Russian Government is wholly different in this consideration to the position of any other Government in the world. In the first place, it is surely unnecessary to point out that Germany and Italy are united in an Anti-Comintern Pact, and that Russia runs as it were two Governments — one the Government with which the noble Viscount has just been dealing, and another Government which he never sees and with which he never comes into contact, which is known as the Comintern. Russia alone of all the countries of Europe is definitely and officially anti-Christian and anti-religious. Does that recommend her to the other countries of Europe or to the great middle opinion which we ought to cultivate? Russia alone runs this dual system of Government, and Russia alone — no, I will not say alone, because the Nazis have adopted her method in this respect — keeps in every country of Europe a Party, I will not say devoted to her territorial interests, but devoted to her ideological interests. Even in Poland, you will find no less than 300,000 men enrolled in the Communist Party and there is a Communist Party in every country of Europe. It is with a Government which carries this appendage of the Comintern that we are now negotiating. That, to me, is a wholly new development in our policy. . . .



## 23. DANZIG (JUNE 28, 1939)

**E**ARLY IN JUNE 1939, 6,000 uniformed S.A. troops arrived in Danzig in automobiles of the Reichswehr under the pretense of attending a sports competition.

On June 17, 1939 the German Minister of Propaganda Dr. Goebbels made a speech in Danzig in which, preparing the ground for future happenings, he said the following:

*"... Your determination to return to the great mother of our common Fatherland is strong and invincible. It is your misfortune that your beautiful German city lies at the mouth of the Vistula and, according to Warsaw's theories, cities on estuaries always belong to the countries through which the rivers flow". . .*

*According to a London Times editorial Goebbels said that "Great Britain had put a blank cheque at Poland's disposal and was attempting at present to encircle the Reich and Italy in order to renew the policy of 1914. But she was mistaken if she thought to have before her a weak, bourgeois Germany. . . The Danzigers could be certain that every one in Germany knew of their desire to return to the Reich, and shared it. And what the Reich wanted was just as clear. The Fuhrer had expressed it unambiguously in his last Reichstag speech when he said, 'Danzig is a German city and will come to Germany'."*

*Conflicts between Danzig authorities and Polish customs officers continued throughout June.*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 390.

MR. COCKS (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any information concerning the position in Danzig; and whether the formation of a Nazi Free Corps in that city is in accordance with the International agreements regulating its constitution.

UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The third annual District Cultural Week of the National Socialist Party was held at Danzig from 13-18 June. This provided an opportunity for the German Minister of Propaganda to visit the Free City and to deliver a speech on June 17 on the international position of Danzig. In reply to the second part of the question, certain reports have been brought to the notice of His Majesty's Government, but the position is not at the moment quite clear.

MR. COCKS: In view of the somewhat delicate position at Danzig, will not the Government consider easing the position by sending a British naval squadron on a friendly visit to the Baltic?

## 24. LOANS TO POLAND (JUNE 28, 1939)\*

NEGOTIATIONS FOR CREDIT to Poland were held during the summer of 1939. Poland wanted war material credit (to buy raw products and machinery in Great Britain for the production of war materials in Poland) and also she wanted cash credit. The negotiations began June 15, 1939 and lasted until July 25, 1939. The war material credit was granted to Poland (8 million pounds sterling) but shipments of goods bought with that credit never arrived in Poland because of the outbreak of the war. Negotiations for the cash credit of 8½ million pounds sterling (5 million pounds from Great Britain and 3½ million pounds from France\*\*) came up against many

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 390.

\*\* 600 million French francs.

*difficulties. The cash credit for Poland was finally granted on September 7, 1939 (after the beginning of the war).\**

MR. TREE asked the Prime Minister whether he can give any information as to how the financial negotiations with the Polish Government are proceeding.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Discussions are still continuing, and I regret that it is not yet possible to make any statement.

## 25. LOANS TO POLAND (JULY 3, 1939)\*\*

MR. PRICE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether any steps have been taken to afford financial assistance in the form of a loan to Poland for the purchase of armaments.

MR. BUTLER: As the Prime Minister informed my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Mr. Tree) on June 28,\*\* discussions are still continuing, and I regret that it is not yet possible to make any statement.

## 26. DANZIG (JULY 3, 1939)\*\*\*

MR. COCKS (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on the position in Danzig.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Reliable reports indicate that extensive measures of a military character are being carried out in the Free City. A large and increasing number of German nationals have recently arrived in the Free City, ostensibly as tour-

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\* See No. 48

\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 896.

\*\*\* See No. 24.

\*\*\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 899-900.

ists, and a local defense corps is being formed under the name of the Heimwehr. The Polish Government have received from the German Government a notification of a visit by the German cruiser "Koenigsberg" to Danzig for three days from August 25. The Polish Government are informing the Danzig Senate that they see no objection to this visit.\* His Majesty's Government are maintaining close contact with the Polish and French Governments regarding developments in the Danzig situation.

MR. COCKS: Is it a fact that these attempts to fortify Danzig are illegal? Do the Government propose to take steps to inform Herr Hitler personally that any attempt to change the status of Danzig by force will be instantly resisted by His Majesty's Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER: As regards the question of treaty obligations or rights, I should like to have notice of any question on that. With regard to the other parts of the question, the position has been made perfectly clear by my noble Friend.

MR. DALTON (Lab.): Will the Government cause to be conveyed to Warsaw the admiration which is felt in this country at the calm, the courage and the self-control which are being displayed by our Polish Allies in the face of this gross provocation?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The Government much appreciate the attitude of the Polish people.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): Is it not a fact that the fortification of Danzig is a plain violation of Article 5 of the Statute of Danzig?\*\*\*

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have said that I would like notice of questions on that subject.

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\* A few hours before the German cruiser "Koenigsberg" was supposed to arrive in Danzig the Polish Government were informed that the German battleship "Schleswig-Holstein" would arrive in its place. This battleship later took part in the bombardment of Westerplatte from the 1st to the 7th of September, 1939.

\*\* Article 5 of the Statute of Danzig: "The Free City of Danzig cannot, without the previous consent of the League of Nations in each case:

1. Serve as a military or naval base.
2. Erect fortifications.
3. Authorize the manufacture of munitions of war material on its territory."

## 27. DANZIG (JULY 5, 1939)\*

**D**URING THE LAST two weeks of June 1939 many disturbing events occurred in Danzig. His Majesty's Consul in Danzig enumerated these events in his reports of June 28, 30 and July 1 as following:

1. *In contrast to calm in Warsaw, the last week has been increasingly eventful here.*

2. *For the past fortnight the S.A. men have been nightly preparing defenses around the Free City, and on the night of June 26-27 were ordered to stand by for a possible emergency, perhaps in connection with celebration in Gdynia of Polish Feast of the Seas or because the Polish frontier on Danzig-Gdynia road was closed to traffic from midnight on June 26-27 until 4 P.M. on June 27, presumably in connection with the completion of anti-tank defenses.*

3. *The approaches for a pontoon bridge are in active construction on both sides of the Vistula.*

4. *On June 23, Danzig members of the German Automobile Club received an urgent request to complete and return a questionnaire regarding their cars.*

5. *All Danzig owners of motor lorries, trucks, etc., were recently ordered to leave them over-night at military police barracks for inspection after which each vehicle was numbered and returned to its owner.*

6. *Today several hundred draught and saddle horses have been similarly ordered to barracks nominally for inspection, but as some of them come from distant parts of the Free City, it seems possible that they may have*

*been retained, especially as carloads of saddles have also been delivered there.*

*7. Formation of Freicorps is proceeding rapidly.*

*8. In addition to unusually heavily advertised program of week-end events, nearly 1,000 S.S. men from East Prussia and a number of high S. S. officers from Germany arrived here almost unannounced on June 25 ostensibly for sporting contests with local S.S.*

*9. In a speech on June 25 Herr Forster said: "Before us lies a new era and for Germany a great epoch. During recent weeks our Danzig has become the centre of political events. We are all aware that we are in the final throes of our fight for freedom. The Free State of Danzig has taken the longest time. Today everyone knows that the Free State will soon come to an end and we also know how it will end."*

*10. A considerable number of visiting S.S. men remained here when others left last Sunday night. Those remaining are reputed to have performed their military service in Germany and to be members of Adolf Hitler's Verfügungstruppen. They are readily distinguishable by their deportment and slightly different uniforms from local S.S. men. About 300 of them are in military police barracks, which are now very full, and others are in other former local barracks which are capable of accommodating from 1,000 to 1,500 men, and have hitherto been occupied by Danzig social welfare organization which is being transferred to an hotel that has been requisitioned for the purpose. According to the sub-editor of Danziger Vorposten, the largest youth hostel in the world, which is approaching completion here, is to be used as a barracks.*

*11. A number of workmen's dwellings at Praust are said to have been requisitioned for storage of ammunition, and my Argentine colleague informs me that he saw a number of military police equipped with gas masks.*

*12. All Danzig civil servants and students are required to remain within the Free City during their vaca-*

tions, and the latter must devote their holidays to harvesting.

13. Horses continued to arrive yesterday, and about 600 of them are being kept in barracks at which large quantities of hay have also been delivered.

14. For the last few nights the two great shipyards here which normally work all night were closed under strict guard and all workmen evacuated from them.

15. As from tonight Danzig and suburbs were to be blacked out until further notice, and, in case of air raid alarm, all inhabitants were ordered to take refuge in their cellars or public shelters. This order was cancelled this afternoon.

16. Former local barracks are now occupied by large number of young men with obvious military training who wear uniforms similar to Danzig S.S. but with the death's-head emblem on the right collar and "Heimwehr Danzig" on sleeves. Courtyard is occupied by about fifteen military motor lorries (some with trailers) with East Prussia licences and covered with tarpaulins, also by about forty field kitchens.

17. Two thousand men are working twenty-four hours a day in three shifts on construction of barracks at Matzkshuter to accomodate 10,000 men. Work is stated to be well advanced.

18. All dressmakers here are said to be working on bedding, clothing, etc., for barracks and their occupants.

19. It has just been announced that Tiegenmorse-Einlage section of Danzig-Elbing road is closed for major repairs until August 1, and it seems unlikely that pontoon bridge will be ready before that date.

20. On June 30 four German army officers in mufti arrived here by night express from Berlin to organize Danzig Heimwehr.

21. All approaches to hills and dismantled fort, which constitute a popular public promenade on western fringe of the city have been closed with barbed wire and "Verboten" notices.

22. *The walls surrounding the shipyards bear placards "Comrades, keep your mouths shut lest you regret consequences."*

23. *Master of a British steamship whilst he was roving Königsberg from June 28 to June 30 observed considerable military activity, including extensive shipment of camouflaged covered lorries and similar material by small coasting vessels. On June 28 four mediumsized steamers loaded with troops, lorries, field kitchens, etc., left Königsberg ostensibly returning to Hamburg after manoeuvres but actually proceeding to Stettin. Names of steamers were Hohenhorn, with heavy derricks each capable of lifting about 50 tons, Sharnhorn, Tilsit and Utlandhorn, all modern well-equipped vessels, each about 5,000 tons gross.*

24. *The personal impression of the British Consul in Danzig is that extensive military preparations which are being pressed forward so feverishly are part of large-scale operations but not intended for use before August, unless unexpected developments precipitate matters. . .*

MR. COCKS (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware that the military preparations taking place in Danzig constitute a breach of Article 5 of the Statute governing the constitution of the Free City; whether the Government propose to take any action in the matter; and whether he can make a statement on the recent developments in the situation in Danzig.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : Certain of the military preparations which have been reported would appear to constitute a breach of this article of the Danzig statute. As the Prime Minister stated on July 3,\* His Majesty's Government are keeping in touch with the Polish and French Governments regarding all aspects of the Danzig situation. As regards the last part of the question, I have no-

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\* See No. 26.



thing to add to the Prime Minister's statement on July 3.

MR. COCKS: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Government propose to make a joint demarche with France and Poland on the position?

MR. BUTLER: At present we are in touch with these Governments on all aspects of the question, and I cannot say more at the moment.

MR. COCKS asked the Prime Minister whether the announced policy of the Government that this country will use at once the whole of its strength in fulfilment of its pledges to resist further aggression, covers the case of an attempt to bring about a forcible change in the status of Danzig.

MR. BUTLER: I would refer the hon. Member to the terms of our pledge to Poland which Great Britain will certainly fulfill.

MR. COCKS: Can the Minister say at least that if the Poles regard any such action in Danzig as an act of aggression we shall be immediately at her side with all our forces?

MR. BUTLER: The hon. Member will remember that the terms of the guarantee we gave to Poland were directed to a clear threat to her independence.

MR. V. ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the illegal proceedings as to the importations of munitions and armed men into the Free City of Danzig, he will take steps, while there is time, to impress upon the German Government the determination of the British people, by some physical action such as the mobilization of the Fleet.

THE PRIME MINISTER: His Majesty's Government will not fail to take any steps which may seem to them necessary or desirable to make their attitude absolutely clear, but this has already been stated with precision in recent speeches by Ministers.

MR. ADAMS: Did not similar action to that which I have suggested in the question have some considerable effect last autumn?

MR. THURTLÉ (Lab.): Will the Prime Minister consider, as further action, the question of strengthening the Cabinet to impress upon the German Government their determination?

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : Why do the Government not pack up?

MR. MANDER (L.) : Cannot the Prime Minister do something rather better than the broadcast he gave last Sunday night?

28. ANGLO-FRENCH-RUSSIAN CONVERSATIONS.  
BALTIC STATES.  
(JULY 10, 1939)\*

LEUT.-COMMANDER FLETCHER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether, with a view to reassuring certain anxieties felt by Finland and the Baltic States, he will make it plain that in any arrangement His Majesty's Government may enter into, with France and Russia, in fulfillment of our guarantee to Poland and Rumania, there is no intention of interfering in any way in the internal affairs of the countries referred to, but that the objectives of any such arrangement will be the defense of their vital interests, the protection of their freedom and independence, and the maintenance of their neutrality.

MR. QUIBELL (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can give an assurance that no sovereign State contrary to its will shall be included in any non-aggression pact entered into by His Majesty's Government.

MR. A. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether it is a policy of His Majesty's Government that any agreements to resist aggression to which His Majesty's Government is a party, will not impair the independence and freedom of the Baltic States.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is the general policy of His Majesty's Government to maintain respect for the integrity of all sovereign States. In particular, they are aware of the desire of Finland and the Baltic States to preserve their independence

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 1783-1784.

and neutrality, and as this is also the objective of His Majesty's Government they will naturally take full account of these considerations in the present negotiations.

29. DANZIG  
(JULY 10, 1939) \*

ON JULY 10 *Prime Minister Chamberlain made an important statement on the British position concerning Danzig.*

MR. HAROLD MACMILLAN (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether His Majesty's Government will issue a declaration to the effect that any change in the present status of Danzig, other than by agreement to which the Polish Government is a party, whether brought about externally by military action on the part of Germany or internally by a movement initiated or supported by the German Government, will be regarded as an act of aggression on the part of Germany and, therefore, covered by the terms of our pledge to Poland.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER FLETCHER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether any attempt to alter the existing regime at Danzig by aggression from outside or penetration from within will be regarded as within the terms of our pledge to maintain the independence of Poland; and has a communication been made to the Polish Government in these terms.

MR. A. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make on the present situation in Danzig.

MR. V. ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any further statement to make on the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the position of Danzig.

MR. THURTLÉ (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he is now satisfied that the head of the German Government no longer has any doubt of the intention of this country to dis-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 1786-1790.

charge to the full the undertaking it has given to Poland; or has he under consideration any further action with a view to removing any possible doubt or misunderstanding which may still exist.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I would ask hon. Members to be good enough to await the statement which I propose to make at the end of Questions.

*Later —*

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have previously stated that His Majesty's Government are maintaining close contact with the Polish and French Governments on the question of Danzig.\* I have nothing at present to add to the information, which has already been given to the House about the local situation. But I may, perhaps, usefully review the elements of this question as they appear to His Majesty's Government.

Racially Danzig is, almost wholly, a German city; but the prosperity of its inhabitants depends to very large extent upon Polish trade. The Vistula is Poland's only waterway to the Baltic, and the port at its mouth is, therefore, of vital strategic and economic importance to her. Another Power established in Danzig could, if it so desired, block Poland's access to the sea and so exert an economic and military stranglehold upon her. Those who were responsible for framing the present statute of the Free City were fully conscious of these facts, and did their best to make provision accordingly. Moreover, there is no question of any oppression of the German population in Danzig. On the contrary, the administration of the Free City is in German hands, and the only restrictions imposed upon it are not of a kind to curtail the liberties of its citizens. The present settlement, though it may be capable of improvement, cannot in itself be regarded as basically unjust or illogical. The maintenance of the status quo had in fact been guaranteed by the German Chancellor himself up to 1944 by the ten-year Treaty which he had concluded with Marshal Pilsudski.\*\*

Up till last March Germany seems to have felt that, while

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\* See No. 26.

\*\* On January 26, 1934.

the position of Danzig might ultimately require revision, the question was neither urgent nor likely to lead to a serious dispute. But in March, when the German Government put forward an offer in the form of certain desiderata accompanied by a Press campaign, the Polish Government realized that they might presently be faced with a unilateral solution, which they would have to resist with all their forces. They had before them the events which had taken place in Austria, Czechoslovakia and the Memelland. Accordingly, they refused to accept the German point of view, and themselves made suggestions for a possible solution of the problems in which Germany was interested. Certain defensive measures were taken by Poland on March 23\* and the reply was sent to Berlin on March 26. I ask the House to note carefully these dates. It has been freely stated in Germany that it was His Majesty's Government's guarantee which encouraged the Polish Government to take the action which I have described. But it will be observed that our guarantee was not given until March 31. By March 26 no mention of it, even, had been made to the Polish Government.

Recent occurrences in Danzig have inevitably given rise to fears that it is intended to settle her future status by unilateral action, organized by surreptitious methods, thus presenting Poland and other Powers with a *fait accompli*. In such circumstances any action taken by Poland to restore the situation would, it is suggested, be represented as an act of aggression on her part, and if her action were supported by other Powers they would be accused of aiding and abetting her in the use of force.

If the sequence of events should, in fact, be such as is contemplated on this hypothesis, hon. Members will realize, from what I have said earlier, that the issue could not be considered as a purely local matter involving the rights and liberties of the Danzigers, which incidentally are in no way threatened, but would at once raise graver issues affecting Polish national existence and independence. We have guaranteed to give our

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\* On March 21, 1939 the mobilization was ordered of four infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade.

assistance to Poland in the case of a clear threat to her independence, which she considers it vital to resist with her national forces, and we are firmly resolved to carry out this undertaking.

I have said that while the present settlement is neither basically unjust nor illogical, it may be capable of improvement. It may be that in a clearer atmosphere possible improvements could be discussed. Indeed, Colonel Beck has himself said in his speech on May 5 that if the Government of the Reich is guided by two conditions, namely, peaceful intentions and peaceful methods of procedure, all conversations are possible. In his speech before the Reichstag on April 28 the German Chancellor said that if the Polish Government wished to come to fresh contractual arrangements governing its relations with Germany he could but welcome such an idea. He added that any such future arrangements would have to be based on an absolutely clear obligation equally binding on both parties.

His Majesty's Government realize that recent developments in the Free City have disturbed confidence and rendered it difficult at present to find an atmosphere in which reasonable counsels can prevail. In face of this situation the Polish Government have remained calm, and His Majesty's Government hope that the Free City, with her ancient traditions, may again prove, as she has done before in her history, that different nationalities can work together when their real interests coincide. Meanwhile, I trust that all concerned will declare and show their determination not to allow any incidents in connection with Danzig to assume such a character as might constitute a menace to the peace of Europe.

MR. HAROLD MACMILLAN: Arising out of the reply — regarding which the whole House is grateful to the Prime Minister for having clarified the position — may I ask whether the Government will take as serious a view of any attempt to change the actual *de facto* status of Danzig as they would any attempt to change the legal and *de jure* status?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think that, having made a careful and considered statement, it is inadvisable for me now to try and elaborate it in reply to a supplementary question.

MR. A. HENDERSON: Can the Prime Minister say whether the three stipulations that were publicly announced on Friday last by what the Press called an authoritative spokesman as to the basis of any negotiations with a view to securing a settlement of the Danzig question represent the official policy of the Polish Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have not heard any official information about that.

MR. V. ADAMS: As it is vital that the Prime Minister's statement should stand entire without any bewildering embroidery, will my right hon. Friend invite the "Times," therefore, to refrain from embellishing or belittling it?

### 30. DANZIG (JULY 12, 1939)\*

SIR J. MELLOR (C) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any statement to make upon the position of the Danzig loans issued in the United Kingdom.

SIR J. SIMON: On July 4 the Bank of Danzig suspended until further notice transfers for the service of interest and amortization of all Danzig external loans. I have no further information beyond what has already appeared in the Press.

MAJOR MILNER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether the Government have considered the dispatch of an international force to Danzig under the auspices of the League of Nations on the model of the force dispatched to the Saar in 1935; and, if so, with what result.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): No, Sir. An international force was dispatched to the Saar at the time of the holding of the plebiscite for which provision was made in the Peace Treaty. The circumstances in Danzig are not the same.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 349, p. 2259-2260.

MAJOR MILNER asked the Prime Minister whether the Government have considered convening a meeting of the League council on the Danzig question, having regard to the fact that, under Article 102\* of the Versailles Treaty, Danzig was placed under the protection of the League and that the League has wide powers to demand information as to alleged violations of the Danzig constitution?

MR. BUTLER: No, Sir. The League Council have appointed a Committee of Three to follow the situation in Danzig.\*\* Any developments there are kept under review by this Committee.

### 31. POLAND AND SLOVAKIA (JULY 17, 1939)\*\*\*

*ACCORDING to the agreements between the Polish and Czechoslovakian Governments concluded in the fall of 1938, territory containing approximately 10,000 people and 64 square miles was ceded by Slovakia to Poland.*

MR. BENN (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make any statement as to the determination of the Slovak-Polish frontier; and whether he has any information as to recent movements of German troops in Slovakia.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The Polish-Slovak frontier was settled by a Polish-Slovak Frontier Delimitation Commission which signed a number of protocols at the end of November last year. I have seen a report in the Press that the Frontier Commission will meet again within the next few days in Bratislava but my Noble Friend has no official confirmation.

I have no statement to make in reply to the second part of the question.

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\* Article 102 of the Versailles Treaty: "The Principal Allied and Associated Powers undertake to establish the town of Danzig, together with the rest of the territory described in Article 100, as a Free City. It will be placed under the protection of the League of Nations."

\*\* See No. 19.

\*\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p.43.



32. DANZIG  
(JULY 19, 1939)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider the advisability of proposing that the Council of the League of Nations be immediately summoned under Article 11 of the Covenant; that in accordance with Article 5 of the Danzig constitution,\*\* prohibiting the use of Danzig as a military or naval base or the erection of fortifications without the previous consent of the League, and Article 42, the Senate of Danzig be required to furnish forthwith official information as to the alleged violations of Article 5 of the constitution; and further, that in accordance with the resolution of the League of Nations' Council, of November 17, the Council should establish an international police force in order to protect Danzig against aggression and, in accordance with its resolution on June 22, 1921, should instruct the High Commissioner in Danzig to invite Poland to collaborate in its defense.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : In reply to the first part of the question I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. and gallant Member for South East Leeds (Major Milner) on July 12.\*\*\* The task of obtaining information from the Senate is, by the report adopted by the Council on January 27, 1937, entrusted to the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig. The texts of the resolutions referred to by the hon. Member in the last part do not appear to support the interpretations which he seeks to place upon them.

MR. MANDER: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to consider the advisability of sending a detachment

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 369-371.

\*\* See No. 26.

\*\*\* See No. 30.

of British and French troops to the neighborhood of Danzig, in order to make clear our determination to stand firm?

MR. MANDER asked the Prime Minister whether he will make inquiries and inform the House whether heavy artillery capable of threatening Gdynia has been imported into Danzig by Germany contrary to Statute.

MR. BUTLER: The information in my Noble Friend's possession does not confirm any such report.

MR. MANDER: Are the Government satisfied that no artillery of this kind has yet arrived, and if it is sent will they regard it as an act of aggression, to be resisted?

MR. BUTLER: I have been asked to answer the question on the Order Paper, and I have given the hon. Member the information in my possession.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether the provisions of Article 10 of the League Covenant whereby the territorial integrity and political independence of all member States of the League of Nations is to be maintained, applies to Danzig; whether the resolution passed by the League Council of November, 1920, entrusting the defense of the Free City to the Polish Government if the circumstances warrant it, is still in force; and whether it is the policy of His Majesty's Government that Polish resistance to German aggression against Danzig should be considered as action taken to protect the Covenant of the League of Nations?

MR. BUTLER: Danzig is not a separate member of the League of Nations and the provisions of Article 10 are not therefore applicable. The operative resolution of the Council concerning the defense of Danzig is that of June 18, 1921. The last part of the hon. Member's question is hypothetical, but he may rest assured that the policy of His Majesty's Government is to act in accordance with the principles of the Covenant.

MR. HENDERSON: May I ask whether in view of the situation His Majesty's Government propose to raise the situation in Danzig at the forthcoming meeting of the League Council?

MR. BUTLER: As I have explained previously, the League Council has appointed a committee of three to follow the situation, and they are doing so.

### 33. DANZIG (JULY 24, 1939)\*

ON JULY 19, 1939 a customs official of the city of Danzig crossed the Polish frontier along with two Germans from the S.A. near the village of Postelau (Trzcionki). The Polish customs official, Witold Budziewicz, was alarmed and tried to stop them but one of these men shot at Budziewicz and killed him. The representative of the Senate of Danzig called at the office of the Polish High Commissioner in Danzig and expressed regret for the accident.

The attitude of Poland concerning the Danzig problem was summarized in an interview with Marshal Smigly-Rydz on July 17, 1939 published by the "News Chronicle":

"— If Germany persists in her plans for "Anschluss" Poland will fight, even if she fights alone and without allies. The whole nation, to the last man and woman is ready to fight for Poland's independence, for when we say we shall go to war over Danzig we shall be fighting for our independence. Danzig is necessary for Poland. Who controls Danzig controls our economic life. The taking of Danzig by the Germans would be an act which recalls to our minds the partition of Poland. That is why I mobilized four months ago when Herr Hitler again made demands for Danzig and the Corridor. . . In case of war every man and every woman of whatever age would be a soldier of Poland."

MR. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make a statement on the present position in Danzig following the shooting of a Polish customs official.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350. p. 1001-1002.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The matters arising out of the death of a Polish customs official are being dealt with by the Polish Government and the Danzig senate. Meanwhile I would take this opportunity to express my Noble Friend's regret at this unhappy incident.

MR. HENDERSON: In view of the fact that this question asks about the present position in Danzig, has the right Hon. Gentleman any reply to make to the statement of the German official spokesman on Friday last to the effect that the German Government expects the British Government to bring pressure to bear on the Polish Government to agree to the unconditional return of Danzig to the German Reich?

MR. BUTLER: I have no further statement to make on Danzig, and nothing to add to the Prime Minister's recent statement on the subject.

### 34. LOANS TO POLAND (JULY 25, 1939)\*

*P*OLAND RECEIVED the war material credit (8 million pounds sterling), on August 2, 1939, but she did not benefit from this credit because war broke out just one month later. The negotiations for cash credit ran into many difficulties because of problems pertaining to the monetary policies of Poland and Great Britain.

MR. DALTON (Lab.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what outstanding points are still preventing the conclusion of the financial and commercial agreement between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Poland.

SIR J. SIMON: Discussions with the Polish Delegation have covered two separate matters. The first is in connection with

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 1247. See also Nos. 24 and 25.

export credits. His Majesty's Government have offered to guarantee export credits up to the amount of £8,000,000 in order to facilitate the purchase in this country by the Polish Government of material necessary for their defense. The detailed arrangements which will have to be made are now being adjusted between the Polish Financial Delegation and the Government Departments concerned. Discussions have also been proceeding on the possibility of a cash loan to Poland by His Majesty's Government and the French Government acting jointly. I regret that it has not been found possible to reach agreement as to the conditions on which such a loan might be made available in time for the necessary legislation to be passed before the House rises.

MR. DALTON: Am I to understand that these credits are restricted to the purchase of supplies from this country; and, in that event if the Polish Government need some military equipment which this country cannot now supply are they barred from obtaining it from America or elsewhere?

SIR J. SIMON: The first matter to which I referred would be export credits to assist purchases in this country. As regards the further question of the hon. Member, the French Government and ourselves are entirely at one in being willing to assist Poland, if terms can be arranged, in making the necessary purchases of munitions from other countries.

COLONEL NATHAN (Lab.): Have any difficulties arisen through His Majesty's Government refusing to allow any part of this loan to be transformed into either gold or foreign currencies?

SIR J. SIMON: I should prefer not to give a detailed description of the difficulties. They are technical, and I hope the hon. and gallant Gentleman will allow me to say that I do not think it would be in the public interest to do so. There are, as he knows, very complicated questions connected with a matter of this sort.

35. DANZIG  
(JULY 26, 1939) \*

MR. V. ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware that the Nazi forces in Danzig persist in fortifying the Free City; whether these fortification constitute a breach of the strategic integrity of Danzig; and, if so, whether he proposes any action.

MR. BUTLER: While some military preparations have been undertaken in Danzig, the information in the possession of my Noble Friend does not at present lead him to view the situation with undue concern.

MR. ADAMS: Does that mean that the answer to the second limb of the question is in the negative?

MR. BUTLER: It is a little difficult to define what the hon. Member has in mind. Perhaps he will tell me what he has in mind and I shall be able to give him a clearer answer.

MR. N. MACLEAN (Lab.): Can the right hon. Member explain what he means by "undue concern" and what is "due concern"?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 1436.

36. LOANS TO POLAND. VISIT OF GENERAL  
IRONSIDE TO POLAND.  
(JULY 31, 1939)\*

*THE NEGOTIATIONS for cash credit were adjourned on July 25, 1939, until the Fall because Parliament had reached the end of its session. Since agreements concerning loans have to be ratified by Parliament this matter had to wait until Parliament met again.*

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make any statement on the progress of the Anglo-Polish negotiations for a financial and political agreement.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): I am not at present able to add to the information about the financial negotiations given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reply to a question by the hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Dalton) on July 25 last.\*\* The negotiations concerning the permanent agreement with Poland, referred to in the communique issued at the conclusion of Colonel Beck's visit to London, are in progress.

MR. HENDERSON: Are not the difficulties which are holding up this agreement purely of a technical nature, and does the Prime Minister not think that the advantages of securing the agreement would considerably outweigh the disadvantages?

THE PRIME MINISTER: They are of a technical nature. We hope that they will be overcome, but it was not possible to overcome them in time for legislation now. . . .

MR. DALTON (Lab.): . . . May I turn to Poland and say a

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 1921-1922, 2013-2015, 2027, 2098.

\*\* See No. 34.

word or two about the loan. Many of us are very much concerned about the failure of the loan negotiations with Poland. Here again stories have appeared in the Press which may or may not be completely accurate. Surely, the whole purpose of these negotiations is to arm Poland, and arm her quickly, because she is a member of our Peace Front. We have a bilateral arrangement with her, and it is to our interest that she should be strong, and should be quickly made strong. Yet, although export credits have been arranged for some £8,000,000 for purchases in this country, nothing has been arranged whereby Poland can obtain purchasing power to obtain from other countries, including the United States and the Scandinavian countries, arms and equipment which she cannot obtain from us, not because we cannot supply them, but because all that we are producing we require ourselves. We cannot supply them, and the French cannot supply them, and Poland asks for a loan to enable her to buy them elsewhere. It passes my comprehension why it was impossible to arrive at a conclusion in time for legislation to be put through this week. We are told that she wanted a loan from us of £5,000,000 in gold, and the Treasury said there was no precedent for that, or it might be a precedent for something else. Anyhow, they did not think it ought to be agreed to, for reasons which are completely trivial and trumpery in face of the world situation. Suppose, the balloon goes up this month, or next month, or the month after. I can imagine some self-satisfied Treasury official seated in a bomb-proof shelter saying, "Yes, it might have made some difference to the campaign if we had let the Poles have that gold, but it was contrary to our principles. It was never done since Gladstone's time."

It appears to me ridiculous, even if you think that the Polish claim might better have been put in another form, that you should refuse it for some obstructive, pedantic reason. Five million pounds is less than 1 per cent. of the gold stock of this country — we have £550,000,000 — and you will not even give them £5,000,000 in order that they can buy stuff to defend themselves and you, if Hitler should attack either of us. It is fantastic, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer must



take the responsibility, as the Minister concerned, for these Treasury officials. If it were not so fantastic, such boggling and straining at the gnat of financial procedure, one would perhaps be led to ask, as some are asking, whether there is not something behind this refusal. Is it, perhaps, feared that, if the Poles get too many arms too quickly, they will get above themselves? Is there any such fear as that in the minds of those who carried on the negotiations? Is there some plan in the background, by which history may repeat itself and the same kind of pressure be put upon Poland in regard to Danzig as was put on Czechoslovakia in regard to the Sudeten Germans? I ask this because, unless there is such an intention somewhere at the back of the Government's mind — I hope it is too fantastic — why have we boggled at letting the Poles buy these arms?

That is the choice which Ministers have to explain. Have they some sinister and unrevealed purpose to try to keep Poland weak and irresolute? If not, why do they not let them have the money to buy the arms? I shall be glad if we can have a straightforward answer. We all know there are dark forces at work in this country when Parliament is on holiday. The Geoffrey Dawsons and the "Scrutators" will take no such holiday. They will continue their habitual task of weakening the national will and poisoning the public mind, and putting up this and that plausible sophistry — "Shall we fight for Danzig?" — and so forth. We shall be away and unable to answer except sporadically from the platform. Parliament will be silenced. The "Times" and "Scrutator" in his Sunday organ will have the ear of the people to an extent which may well be against the public interest. That is another reason why I regret that this is perhaps the last Debate we shall have on foreign affairs for some months. Five million pounds is too much to lend to Poland to arm herself, but a Minister not at the moment on that bench has been bandying sums running up to £1,000,000,000 — 200 times as much as Poland asks for — for an international loan for super-appeasement. When I read this, I was reminded of one of the most beautiful cartoons of Low's in which he represented a large body of persons with

donkeys' faces and long donkeys' ears marching past in a procession. The Prime Minister was taking the salute and they were all putting forward various proposals for appeasement. One old lady, looking hopefully up to the Prime Minister, said: "Do you think Hitler would let us pay him?" I wonder whether he would. The Prime Minister said that Sir Horace Wilson had seen Herr Wohltat and that the right hon. Gentleman had seen Herr Wohltat, and that both had talked to him. The right hon. Gentleman had mentioned these large figures and large plans, and the only difference between him and Sir Horace Wilson was that Sir Horace Wilson had not mentioned these large figures and large plans. . . .

THE PRIME MINISTER: . . . The object of the hon. Member appeared to be to instill into the mind of the Polish Government a suspicion that we had something sinister behind this difficulty and that we were trying to use it as a lever to prevent the Poles from arming and carrying out their full share in the Peace Front. I do not believe that any hon. Member, with perhaps the one exception, believes that story. I am not going to add to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other day when he declared that the reasons which had made it difficult for us were technical, and that it was not in the public interest to discuss them. I am not going to add to that except this, that the difficulty did not arise in connection with the purchase of arms from other countries than this one; it was a difficulty connected with the request of the Polish Government for a loan in gold. . . .

MR. BUTLER: . . . Reference has been made to negotiations for a loan to Poland. We greatly regret that it has not yet been found possible to come to a satisfactory agreement with Poland on the subject of a loan, but I would deprecate criticisms which make out that there is anything sinister behind the policy of His Majesty's Government in this regard. I would remind the Committee that £8,000,000 of credits have been given to Poland, and that the Polish Press, the Polish public and the Polish Government have appreciated the action we have taken.

I would also draw the attention of the Committee to the recent successful visit of General Ironside as an indication of

the close and understanding collaboration between our two Governments. The Inspector-General of Overseas Forces, as he is called, has just paid a visit to Warsaw. We are much gratified at the frank and friendly manner in which Sir Edmund Ironside was received, and the conversations he had with Marshal Smigly-Rydz, M. Beck, and other Polish leaders. This collaboration has added a fresh contribution to mutual understanding on the part of the two Governments in the common problem which faces them. I would add here, on the subject of Poland, that it is hoped shortly to embody in a formal agreement the understanding which we reached in the early stages. The negotiations are proceeding, and we are at present awaiting the further views of the Polish Government before reaching a final conclusion.

37. DANZIG  
(JULY 31, 1939)

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): ...I said that there was more than one area of unrest in Europe and elsewhere. In Europe anxiety at the present time tends to center around the City of Danzig. It was, I think, on the 10th of this month that I made a statement in this House\*\* — a statement which I may tell the right hon. Gentleman has not, so far as I can remember, yet been endorsed by the Foreign Secretary, but with which I have every reason to believe he entirely concurs. That was a statement which in clear and unmistakable terms expressed the determination of His Majesty's Government. I feel that to add to that statement today could do nothing to strengthen it, and I do not wish to do anything to weaken it. The local situation in Danzig is one which has been causing a considerable amount of public apprehension, and it is obviously one which requires very careful watching; but

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 2024, 2036-37, 2085.

\*\* See No. 29.

some of the reports, at any rate, which I have seen in the Press about the extent of the militarization which has taken place have undoubtedly been exaggerated. Therefore, while we shall continue to watch this situation, I think my Noble Friend was justified recently in saying that he does not feel undue concern about it.\* There have been some frontier incidents which have rather increased than decreased the tension, but the Polish Government, which has shown the most admirable calm, may, I think, be trusted to continue to exercise a wise and statesmanlike restraint.

MR. EDEN (C.): ... May I say something now about the situation in Danzig? My right hon. Friend said he stood by the declaration which he made the other day.\*\* That declaration received the endorsement of every section of this House, and, if I may say so, I thought it could not have been improved by one word or comma. The truth is that there is no Danzig issue in the narrow sense of the term. What does exist is an issue concerned with the future independence of Poland. Germans in Danzig today do not undergo any servitude, except that servitude which they care to impose upon themselves. The city is ruled by the Nazis; they have suppressed all other political parties and all other newspapers, they have expelled the Jews and they do exactly as they like, as regards internal affairs.

As to the actual system which now exists I would like to say this. There have been many critics of the Versailles settlement in respect of Danzig. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I have had, perhaps, rather more to do with the working of that system than anybody else. I have no particular reason to defend the Treaty of Versailles. I have been accused of many misdeeds but nobody has ever said that I drafted that Treaty. But I can say, and I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will bear me out in this, that that system, though not ideal, is definitely workable, if there be the will to work it. We have to remember that at Versailles the Powers were faced by two conflicting demands which could not be

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\* See No. 35.

\*\* See No. 29.

wholly reconciled. Poland wished Danzig to be included in her territory and Germany wished to retain Danzig in her territory.

All through the centuries there has been this problem of Danzig's special position, and it seems to me that the solution which the Powers, when they made the Peace Treaty, sought to work out, was by no means unreasonable. It gave Danzig its own life and it gave Poland its own port. Let us not forget that without that port Poland's life could hardly be maintained. The Fourteen Points of President Wilson, which Germany herself is so fond of acclaiming, recognized Poland's right to a secure outlet to the sea. Therefore I say that there is no narrow Danzig issue. If you like there is the issue of the so-called Corridor. Dr. Goebbels has tried to link it up with Danzig but in point of fact the Corridor has always been Polish in population and if you were to deprive Poland of the Corridor and of the use of Danzig, then, I repeat, that country's life would be placed in jeopardy.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : . . . The Prime Minister made reference to Danzig and Poland, and he said in connection with Danzig that the Polish Government have shown an admirable restraint. That statement was received with great favor by hon. Members opposite. The Government of Poland, said the Prime Minister, had shown admirable restraint, and he hoped and was sure that they would continue to do so. Why should the Polish Government show admirable restraint? This is exactly what we were told about the Government of Czechoslovakia. The Prime Minister at that Box a year ago said that the Government of Czechoslovakia were showing admirable restraint. Why is it that it is always those who are being attacked who have to show admirable restraint and that we allow the aggressors to go on from one stage to another? I suggest that it is about time that we encouraged Poland to adopt a different attitude towards the aggression that is going on in Danzig, and I am certain that if Poland got the encouragement that she deserves and adopted a firm attitude, then the aggression would soon stop. Make no mistake about it. Herr Hitler, Goering and

the unspeakable Goebbels understand that if war were to come, no matter what would happen to the others, they would be finished completely. But they are trading on the Fifth Column in this country, and they are trading on the Fifth Column in France. They have played a clever tune with the boggy of Bolshevism...

### 38. INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (JULY 31, 1939)\*

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.) : On April 26, in a debate on conscription, the Prime Minister remarked that we are living in times which are not peace in any sense in which that word can be fairly used. I have never concealed from the House or from this Committee that in my opinion that would be the inevitable result, and perhaps not the worst result, of the foreign policy upon which His Majesty's Government embarked at the beginning of last year; but in this dangerous and menacing situation it seems to me that the best use that can be made of this Debate is not to pursue past controversies, but to obtain as precise information as possible about the principles of the foreign policy of the Government at the present time, and their practical application in the immediate future to the problems which now face us. Accordingly, my speech will consist of questions, and in choosing my point of departure I intend to go no further back than the speech of the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs at the Chatham House dinner a month ago.\*\* In that speech the Secretary of State summed up the policy of the Government in these words :

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, 1992-2005, 2040.

\*\* "In the past we have always stood out against the attempt by any single Power to dominate Europe at the expense of the liberties of other nations, and British policy is, therefore, only following the inevitable line of its own history, if such an attempt were to be made again. . ." From Lord Halifax's speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, June 29, 1939.

*"British policy rests on twin foundations of purpose. One is determination to resist force; the other is our recognition of the world's desire to get on with the constructive work of building peace."*

And he went on:

*"Our immediate task is — here I end as I began — to resist aggression. I would emphasize that tonight with all the strength at my command, so that nobody may misunderstand it."*

Earlier in the same speech he had said:

*"We know that if international law and order is to be preserved we must be prepared to fight in its defense."*

The accredited leaders of both the Opposition parties, in language equally plain, clear and downright, have endorsed that speech. The Prime Minister has not yet done so. [Hon. Members: "Oh."] I stated a fact — that the Prime Minister has not done so in terms equally firm, clear and downright, and I hope that the opportunity which this Debate will afford him will enable him to make his position equally clear. . . .

I am not attempting this afternoon to allocate blame for our failure so far to attain success in the negotiations with Russia. We have not yet got sufficient material on which to base a judgment. It is, however, my contention that a full account of these negotiations ought to have been given to the House of Commons a long time ago. While negotiations are in progress there is sometimes and at some stages an advantage in giving full publicity to the case of each side. There is often and at many stages an advantage in secrecy. But these negotiations are neither in secret nor in public, but in a twilight of inspired newspaper comment — [An Hon. Member: "From where?"] — from almost every quarter, which has stirred up suspicions of British and French policy in Holland and in the Baltic States, and has given Dr. Goebbels a rich opportunity,

which he has not been slow to exploit, for intrigue and propaganda in those countries. This twilight is giving us all the disadvantages both of publicity and of secrecy. The Government may contend that the negotiations are their responsibility and that they must decide when Parliament should be consulted. But they are not the only people who are negotiating. The public Press, with its sources of information in the Government Departments and in Embassies here and in other capitals, have been playing a great part in these negotiations, and I cannot help thinking that it would have been healthier, more democratic and might even have helped the conduct of the negotiations if we in Parliament could have played our constitutional part by hearing what the difficulties were and expressing our points of view as the representatives of the people.

For my own part I have always been and am still hopeful that an agreement will be reached with Russia, and for this reason: that agreements between nations do not, fortunately in this case, depend upon sentiment, but upon the existence of common interests, and I have been convinced by a study of the speeches of M. Stalin and other Russian statesmen, and of the resolutions which have been passed by Russian organs of Government, that the Soviet Government believe that such an agreement is in the interests of the Russian people. But if the foundation of such agreement must be common interest, its conclusion and effectiveness must depend upon the growth of mutual co-operation and friendship between the two countries. We want the help of Russia. Therefore, we must dissipate the fog of suspicion and distrust of Britain which exists there. Therefore we must make friends with Russia, and the first principle of friendship is respect. So we must all of us learn to respect Soviet Russia; and as a gesture of friendship and respect at this critical hour, when the negotiations are entering upon a new and more hopeful and more practical phase, we ought to send to represent us in these political and staff talks in Moscow — I am not going to bandy the names of individuals in this Debate — if only for a short time, a man of the highest standing in this country. Let me say with what pleasure I heard the Prime Minister's answer at Question



Time that a military and naval and air delegation is going to Russia this week, and that at the head of the British delegation is to be an officer so distinguished as Admiral Sir Reginald Ernle-Erle-Drax.\* Nobody who knows the opinion held by officers of the Navy of that distinguished Admiral can be ignorant of the fact that he is a man of resolute character and broad views who can be trusted to take a big line, and he is therefore an admirable representative of the British Navy in these discussions. But I would urge that we ought to send, if only for a few days, to give an impulse to these negotiations at this new stage, a man of the highest political standing in our own country, a man who on account of his personal status and perhaps of the dignity of his office would have access to the most powerful authorities in the Kremlin.

It would not, I think, be useful for me at this stage to offer more than a very few words of comment on the points of difficulty in the negotiations until the Prime Minister has precisely defined them. I would only say two things: first, that none of us would countenance any encroachment, from whatever quarter, upon the independence of the Baltic States, whose achievements we admire and whose friendship we enjoy and wish to preserve; and, secondly, that nobody who glances at a map of the Baltic Sea can doubt that the interest of Russia in the independence and the neutrality of the Baltic States is no less than ours in the independence and neutrality of the Low Countries. Events in Czechoslovakia, in Spain and in Danzig, particularly in recent weeks, illustrate the absolute necessity of finding some practical, workable definition of the phrase "indirect aggression." So the first point on which we seek precise assurances from His Majesty's Government is that their immediate task, as defined by the Secretary of State, to resist aggression is being facilitated by the consolidation of the Peace Front, and especially by the inclusion of Soviet Russia.

The Secretary of State also declared with great emphasis at the Chatham House dinner that while no blow would be struck and no shot fired except in defense against aggression

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\* See No. 41.

— and here I quote his exact words:

*“what is also now fully and universally accepted in this country, but what may not even yet be as well understood elsewhere, is that, in the event of further aggression we are resolved to use at once the whole of our strength in fulfilment of our pledges to resist it.”*

Further, he said that provocative insults offered to our countrymen further afield do not pass unnoticed here, and he added:

*“I can say at once that Great Britain is not prepared to yield either to calumnies or to force.”*

I ask the Prime Minister how those principles are going to be applied by His Majesty's Government in those quarters of the world where danger exists at the present time, and I propose particularly to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to four quarters of the world — Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Danzig and the Far East.

I raise the question of Czechoslovakia for two reasons. First, because now that we are committed by the Secretary of State to this hazardous, but in my opinion necessary, enterprise of stopping aggression, it is vital that the moral basis of our action should be sound, and it cannot be sound if we are to condone the annexation of Czechoslovakia and the suppression of the democratic liberties of the Czech people. May I say, in passing, that I regretted the decision of His Majesty's Government to accord even de facto recognition to German rule in Czechoslovakia by applying for an exequatur for the British Consul. At Question Time I have been criticizing the Government for making that application. I have made my criticism, and let me now say frankly to the Government that I am at least glad that they stood firm and did not yield to the German demands to recognize the annexation de jure. That is so far satisfactory. But I raise this matter for a practical reason also. The situation in Czechoslovakia is now very tense. Terrible incidents, involving in at least one case serious loss of

life, have already occurred. A spark might easily be struck in that country which might set all Europe ablaze. We can count upon cool-headed Czech statesmen in that country, and those who are now in exile, doing all they can to restrain their people from action which could only bring disaster on their heads as well as on ours. Surely it would strengthen their hand and lighten the dark and dangerous mood of despair into which the Czech people are falling if His Majesty's Government would plainly declare that the restoration of their freedom and independence is a firmly settled objective of British policy.

Then I come to Hungary, who, although united in a close friendship with Poland, is not a member of the Peace Front, who has, indeed, joined the Anti-Comintern Pact and has received no pledge of British support in maintaining her independence. Nevertheless, it is by no means impossible that while Parliament is in recess Hungary may become the object of aggression and may wish to defend her independence and neutrality. Now, in the whole of the Chatham House speech there is no suggestion that our immediate task of resistance to aggression is limited to those countries to whom we have given explicit pledges of help, and therefore I ask the Prime Minister, if Hungary were the object of unprovoked aggression and decided to defend her independence and neutrality, should we regard it as our duty to help her to resist that aggression?

Then I come to Danzig. There can be no shadow of doubt about our obligations to help Poland to defend herself against any act of aggression against Danzig. But when does aggression begin? It is many weeks now since arms began to be imported clandestinely and in small quantities, by road, from East Prussia into Danzig. Gradually the consignments of arms became bigger and bigger. They began to be imported by day as well as by night, by sea as well as by land. Large consignments come in by sea, and Polish customs officers are, we are told, forbidden to enter certain docks where they have a legal right to go for the sufficient and practical reason that rifles, machine guns, artillery and ammunition are being landed there in ever-increasing quantities. The parties of "tourists" visit-

ing Danzig have increased to the point at which it is estimated by the Warsaw correspondent of the "Sunday Times" that there are now 60,000 German troops and S.S. men in Danzig territory. A quarter of the Danzig frontier with Poland is reported to be fortified; and further sums to complete the fortifications have been voted by the Danzig Senate and are being obtained by confiscating the property of Jews.

Does the statement of the Under-Secretary of State last Wednesday that the Secretary of State does not view the situation in Danzig with "undue concern" still represent the views of His Majesty's Government?\* Is there any point short of the complete military occupation of Danzig by a well-equipped German army, the expulsion of all Polish officials, and the declaration of Danzig as a part of the Reich — is there any point short of that which His Majesty's Government would regard as constituting aggression? Nobody doubts that we are pledged to resist German aggression in Danzig. The question which I ask the Prime Minister is, are we going to resist it? If so, at what point? Surely it is vital that the Germans should know? Unless they are told that there is some point at which we should take action why should they stop their present proceedings in Danzig until the territory is completely absorbed into the military system and fortifications of East Prussia? Then, with her economic life under German control, Poland would have to come to terms with Germany, and the Peace Front would crumble into futility. If peace is to be preserved and aggression stopped His Majesty's Government must tell us and tell Germany at what point the line is going to be drawn in Danzig. . . .

Let me in conclusion offer the Committee in a few sentences my own suggestions for giving effect to the principles of foreign policy laid down by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Chatham House speech. First the consolidation of the Peace Front by pressing forward with the negotiations with Russia and by staff consultations with other countries. We are glad to know that such consultations have been taking

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\* See No. 35.

place with Poland and Turkey, and we would also press for economic arrangements, such as the purchase of Greek tobacco, designed to strengthen the smaller countries whom we are pledged to support. Secondly, once the peace front is formed and consolidated, let it be based firmly and openly on the Covenant of the League of Nations and let the members declare their acceptance of the obligations of the Covenant. Thirdly, let the members of the Peace Front establish between themselves and loyal signatories of the Covenant and of the Kellogg Pact renouncing war as an instrument of national policy, the widest possible measure of economic co-operation, including the reduction of tariff and quota barriers to overseas trade and equal access to Colonial markets and raw materials, with guarantees for the principle of trusteeship, both for the natives and for other countries, through an extension of the mandatory system.

Fourthly, let it be made clear that all members of the Peace Front are willing to share with all other nations, including Germany and Italy, all advantages of this association, provided only that they will also share its obligations. That places the responsibility for the policy of encirclement where the Secretary of State placed it in his Chatham House speech, on German shoulders. It is an encirclement which Germany can break at any time by joining the circle with complete equality of rights and status on the basis of disarmament and the acceptance of the rule of law and third-party judgment in all disputes. At this point, however, I would interpolate one further question to the Prime Minister. Will he give Parliament an assurance that no conversation, either official or unofficial, between His Majesty's Government and the German and Italian Government, will be begun without the knowledge of other States who are associated with us in the Peace Front?

Lastly, as a first step towards encouraging this co-operation from Germany and Italy — but, of course, after the construction of the Peace Front is complete and only in co-operation with the other members of the Peace Front — I would suggest a conference to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, not a general conference, on all the political and economic issues of

the day — for President Roosevelt has already proposed that to Herr Hitler and he has rejected it\* — but a conference with an important but limited objective the success of which would both foster and encourage a spirit of co-operation among all States and would relieve the world of a terrible menace — a conference on the reduction and limitation of air armaments. If the Governments would bring themselves to relinquish, or at least to limit, the destructive power of the air weapon, mankind would have taken a big step back towards sanity and peace.

The Prime Minister never spares himself in the discharge of his public duties and in the pursuit of peace, but the flower of safety eludes him. His chances of success may well depend on the firmness of his grasp of the nettle danger, and in the measure in which he shows firmness in applying to his foreign policy the principles of the Chatham House speech he will be able to consolidate both in this country and abroad the forces of resistance to aggression.

SIR A. WILSON: . . . I hope we shall not be required to sign the Anglo-Russian Agreement on the dotted line merely in order to get an agreement. We know from the Finnish Press and other sources that if we do what Russia requires of us, we shall be required to induce Poland and Rumania to cancel their anti-Soviet Agreement of 1935-36. Russia requires her forces to have access to and to march through the territories of both Poland and Rumania, who are likely to find such a prospect quite intolerable. The Rumanians know that Bessarabia is still claimed by Russia, and the Poles have not forgotten the events of 1920 and they know that Russia demands the right to use their harbors and their territory. There is little doubt that Finland, Latvia, and Estonia would be thrown into the arms of Germany were we to do what Russia expects of us; the instability of Europe would be increased and not lessened.

I believe that on other matters as well there is still a substantial difference of opinion between Russia and ourselves and France, and I much hope that the Government will not be driven by speeches in this House to conclude an agreement with

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\* See No. 10.

Russia which would be interpreted in the Baltic States, Poland, and Rumania, as a betrayal of their interests in the interests of Britain and France. I have full confidence in the policy that is being pursued by the Prime Minister, and I am certain that the delay which has been caused during the past few months in the discussions is not due to any unreasonable obstinacy on our part. I will not attempt to deal with the problems which arise with regard to Turkey, but when we are asked why we do not at once conclude an agreement with Russia, it is pertinent to remark that there are other Powers besides France and Britain concerned in the matter, and that we must keep in touch with Poland and Rumania and perhaps also with Turkey before we finally bring Russia into an agreement.

### 39. LOANS TO POLAND

(AUGUST 2, 1939)\*

CAPTAIN ALAN GRAHAM (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will assure the House that he will prevent any part of the forthcoming loan to Poland being used for the production of synthetic rubber, which would be directly prejudiced to the British rubber industry in Malaya.

MR. HANNAH (C) asked the Prime Minister whether he has taken steps to safeguard the interests of British Malaya by insisting that none of the money which is shortly to be lent by British taxpayers to support Polish industry shall be allotted to the production of synthetic rubber.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : There is no proposal for the employment of the export credits, which are being given to Poland, on synthetic rubber. . .

MR. PRICE (Lab.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the conditions which were asked from the

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 2347-2348, 2389.

Polish Government for the borrowing of 5,000,000 pounds sterling from this country; what part of the conditions were unacceptable to the Polish Government, and whether negotiations are to continue.

CAPTAIN CROOKSHANK: As my right hon. Friend has already informed the House, he does not think that it would be in the public interest to give a detailed description of the technical points on which difficulties arose.\* In reply to the last part of the question, the offer made by His Majesty's Government and the French Government remains open.

#### 40. DANZIG. LOANS TO POLAND (AUGUST 3, 1939)\*\*

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: . . . Now I must just say a word or two in regard to another subject on which the noble Lord, Lord Davies, the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, and I think others have asked me a question. That is Danzig. But I do not know, with your Lordships permission, that I want to say very much. Your Lordships will recollect that the Prime Minister in another place on July 10 last\*\*\* set out the attitude of His Majesty's Government in a statement which, in some quarters there may be surprise to learn, I had some hand in drafting. I do not want to quote parts of that statement because it was a balanced whole, and still less would I wish to quote it all to your Lordships, but I would only say this in regard to it. Its terms were I think clear, they were precise, and they were certainly carefully weighed, and I do not wish to say today anything in any way to weaken whatever may be held to be their effect or their value. But I would say one word in reply to a particular point raised by the noble Lord, Lord Davies. He

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\* See No. 34.

\*\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 861-862.

\*\*\* See No. 29.



spoke about the possibilities of an international force in Danzig. Those of us who are familiar with the contributions that the noble Lord from time to time makes in your Lordships' House were not surprised to find that he had adjusted his remedy of universal application to that which is for the moment of particular interest in all our minds. The fact that I do not think, as I do not think, that the installation of an international force in Danzig at this moment would be a practical and useful step in all the circumstances, does not mean that His Majesty's Government are not watching the situation most closely or that they are not fully alive to the possible repercussions or developments in that quarter upon the future of European peace.

May I say before I leave that part of the world a few words in regard to Poland and more particularly the Anglo-Polish financial negotiations to which reference has been made? As your Lordships know, discussions with the Polish delegation have covered two separate matters. The first relates to export credits, and I am glad to say, as your Lordships may have noticed in the Press, that an agreement was signed yesterday for the guarantee of export credits to Poland up to an amount of rather over 8,000,000 pounds in order to facilitate the purchase in this country by the Polish Government of material necessary for their defense. Discussions have also been taking place on the possibility of a cash loan to Poland by His Majesty's Government and the French Government acting jointly, and along with all members of your Lordship's House I greatly regret that it was not found possible to reach agreement as to the conditions in which such a loan might be made available in time for Parliament to be asked to pass the necessary legislation before we rise. The difficulties that were in the way were, as has been stated in another place, technical difficulties, and it would not I think be in the public interest to discuss them,\* but I may add just this, that the difficulties that arose were not difficulties in connection with the purchase of arms by Poland in countries other

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\* See Nos. 34 and 39.

than the United Kingdom. There has been some misconception on that point, and I think it is worth making that plain. I would also add that these difficulties have in no degree — I think I can safely say this — impaired the relations of complete confidence that exist between the Governments of the two countries...

#### 41. TALKS IN MOSCOW (AUGUST 3, 1939)\*

TALKS BETWEEN GREAT Britain, Soviet Russia and France (begun in the spring of 1939 in Moscow) were continuing. On June 14, 1939 Mr. William Strang, member of the British Foreign Office and an expert on Russian affairs, arrived in Moscow to take part in the talks along with Britain's Ambassador Sir William Seeds and France's Ambassador M. Nagiar. Mr. Strang left Moscow on August 7 and on August 11 a British-French military mission arrived in Moscow headed by Admiral Drax (Great Britain)\*\* and General Doumenc (France). Marshal Voroshilov was at the head of the Soviet delegation.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX): ...Now I must say something about Russia. His Majesty's Government have, I suppose, taken the lead in endeavoring to organize a combination of resistance against aggression, and the fact that the principal portion of blame for every difficulty or delay falls on them shows indeed that their leading role is generally acknowledged. If the world were just, His Majesty's Government would receive, of course, the lion's share of credit for whatever has been achieved, but as the world, or the people in it, is or are not always just, His Majesty's Government make no complaint at all of shouldering the

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 857-860.

\*\* See No. 38.

greater part of the blame for real or imaginary failures. The basis of British policy has been, as your Lordships are aware, close co-operation with France in defense of interests that are common, as was explicitly laid down in the declaration made so long ago as the beginning of February by my right honorable friend the Prime Minister in another place. It was starting from that point that His Majesty's Government offered their guarantee to Poland and Rumania, and undoubtedly by doing that they made a substantial contribution to the security of Russia and it was in view of the fact that they felt obliged at that time to act promptly, with, I think I can say, the approval of the overwhelming mass of opinion in this country — not in the presence of Lord Ponsonby clearly unanimous, but I think the overwhelming mass of opinion — that they did not make their action dependent on receiving any counterpart then and there from the Soviet Government.

The present negotiations with Russia have, as we all know, as their object the strengthening of the forces against possible aggression, and noble Lords will no doubt realize that to provide an instrument which will cover every possible contingency is a very complicated task which must inevitably give rise to certain divergencies of view. Moreover, as we also know very well, the problem is further complicated by the necessity of trying to provide for the new technique of indirect aggression. His Majesty's Government and the French Government and the Soviet Government are in full agreement on the necessity of trying to make such provision, but the differences which have arisen relate to the precise form in which this elusive shadow of indirect aggression can be brought to definition. Our common object is to find a formula which may cover what may rightly be regarded as indirect aggression without in any way encroaching on the independence and the neutrality of other States, and it is no secret that the proposals that the British and French Governments have made have appeared to the Soviet Government insufficiently comprehensive, whilst the formula favored by the Soviet Government has seemed to His Majesty's Government and the French Government to go too far in the other direction. The delays — and I confess,

although I am naturally restrained in judgment, I am not so pessimistic as Lord Ponsonby who talks in terms of years — which have occurred have not only risen from the complexity of the problem in hand which affects the rights and interests of a very large number of States.

I rather doubt whether even noble Lords, and I am quite sure still more of the general public outside, fully realize all that is involved in negotiations of this character. It is quite true that an interim agreement such as those made with Poland and with Turkey can be concluded relatively quickly; in the case of both these countries, the formal agreements are still under discussion. The noble Lord, Lord Davies, asked me whether our agreement with Poland included a definition of indirect aggression and, if it did, why it was not possible to transplant that definition into the Russian Agreement. Well, the answer is that the formal agreement with Poland is still being agreed, it is still not concluded, and the arrangement on which we have been working and are working with Poland does not, I think, refer to indirect aggression in the form that he has in his mind, and for the simple reason that will be at once apparent to the noble Lord if he casts his mind back, that our guarantee to Poland rested upon a perfectly simple, precise, but rather different basis. Our guarantee to Poland, he will remember, was made operative in the event of Polish independence being clearly threatened and the Polish Government feeling it necessary to resist and so on. However, that is rather by way of parenthesis.

The Soviet Government, in contra-distinction from what we were able to do with Turkey and Poland, preferred to proceed without any intermediate stage to the conclusion of a formal agreement, and the terms of that formal agreement naturally have required careful consideration. It was inevitable that there was a great deal of discussion to be done on the drafting and so on. I was very glad to hear the noble Lord, Lord Davies, acknowledge as he very fairly did, that the fact that we had to agree any modifications and alterations with the French Government necessarily and inevitably involved a certain measure of additional time expenditure. It has been assumed in

some quarters, and I rather think that Lord Davies assumed it today — attributing, indeed, I think, to me a certain role that seemed to him appropriate — that had His Majesty's Government been represented by a Cabinet Minister instead of an Ambassador a quick agreement would have been secured. Well, I do not really know what warrant he can certainly feel to have for any such surmise, and I do not think experience supports him. He will remember, as I remember, the Washington Naval Conference, for example, in 1921, when His Majesty's Government was represented by a most distinguished Minister, the late Lord Balfour. Although the ground for that Conference had been prepared with the utmost diligence through diplomatic channels it took no less than three months there to secure agreement. In the present case I understand M. Molotov is obliged at every stage to consult his Government, and the same would have applied to any British representative, whether in the Cabinet or out of the Cabinet, who had been on our behalf conducting the negotiations for His Majesty's Government in Moscow.

LORD DAVIES (L.): I apologize for interrupting the noble Viscount, but may I point out that at Washington several nations were represented by delegations, whilst the present discussions in Moscow are bilateral, only two countries being involved?

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: Yes, I appreciate the noble Lord's point, but he perhaps will not overlook the fact that if you have the interests of several nations to consider, it may be easier if you have in one place the representatives of all these nations, than if the representatives of two or three nations have to consider the interests of many countries not represented, which has been our case in these negotiations. Leaving that aside, the fact that His Majesty's Government and the French Government have decided to dispatch Military Missions to Moscow — I think they leave, if I am rightly informed, the day after tomorrow — before full agreement has been reached on the political issues, may be held, I hope, to be the best evidence of the bona fides and determination of His Majesty's Government, and concrete evidence not only of our interest to bring these

negotiations to an early and successful conclusion but of our belief that that step will facilitate outstanding discussions on political issues which will proceed simultaneously with the military discussions...

42. DANZIG  
(AUGUST 4, 1939)\*

MR. V. ADAMS (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make on the growth of Nazi aggression in Danzig.

MR. A. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can state the extent to which Danzig has now been militarized.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): There has in recent weeks been increasing military and para-military activity in the Free City. As the Prime Minister stated in the Debate on Monday, the local situation is being carefully watched and the Polish Government is maintaining close contact with His Majesty's Government.

MR. ADAMS: Will the mounting of heavy guns in Danzig be a test of direct aggression?

MR. BUTLER: We have no information that they have been mounted.

MR. ADAMS: Yes, but supposing heavy guns are mounted there, will it be a test?

MR. BUTLER: I cannot answer a question of that hypothetical character.

SIR P. HARRIS (L.): Would the right hon. Gentleman say whether the High Commissioner for Danzig keeps the League of Nations informed of all proceedings there, in accordance with his duties?

MR. BUTLER: Yes, Sir, the High Commissioner is in touch

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 350, p. 2821-2822.

with the Committee of Three, appointed by the Council to follow the situation.

MR. MANDER (Lab.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is not the case that Danzig, in effect, has already been completely handed over to the Reich, except for the introduction of heavy artillery which would command Gdynia?

MR. BUTLER: No, Sir, I cannot.

#### 43. GERMAN-SOVIET PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION (AUGUST 24, 1939)\*

ON AUGUST 21, 1939 the Soviet Government published the following announcement about the conclusion of a Trade-Credit Agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Germany:

*"On August 19, after long negotiations which terminated successfully, a Trade-Credit Agreement was signed in Berlin between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.*

*The agreement was signed by Assistant Trade Representative E. Dabarin for the U.S.S.R., and by Mr. Schnurre for Germany.*

*The Trade-Credit Agreement provides for a German credit of 200,000,000 marks to the U.S.S.R. for seven years at 5 per cent for the purchase of German commodities during two years from the date of signature of the agreement.*

*The agreement likewise provides for the delivery of 180,000,000 German marks' worth of Soviet commodities to Germany during the same period; that is, two years."*

*(Izvestia, August 21, 1939)*

*On August 22, 1939, Moscow issued a communiqué about the impending visit of German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop to Moscow. Following is the text of the communiqué:*

*"The Trade and Credit Pact having been concluded,*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 3-16, 28-41, 55-56. House of Lords. Vol. 114, 869-881.

*the question of improving political relations between Germany and Russia arises. An exchange of opinions took place on this question between the governments of the two*



Signing of the German-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression.  
Von Ribbentrop, Stalin, Molotov. August 23, 1939.

*countries, and disclosed the mutual desire to discharge the tension between the two countries, dispel the possibility of war, and conclude a non-aggression pact. In this connec-*



*tion the German Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop, will come to Moscow in the course of the next few days for the necessary conversations."*

*On August 23, 1939 a Pact of Non-Aggression was concluded between Germany and the U.S.S.R. The text is as follows:*

*"The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, guided by the desire to strengthen the cause of peace between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and taking as a basis the fundamental regulations of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April, 1936, between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have reached the following agreements:*

*Article 1. The two Contracting Parties bind themselves to refrain from any act of force, any aggressive action and any attack on one another, both singly and also jointly with other Powers.*

*Article 2. In the event of one of the Contracting Parties becoming the object of warlike action on the part of a third Power, the other Contracting Party shall in no manner support this third Power.*

*Article 3. The Governments of the two Contracting Parties shall in future remain continuously in touch with one another, by way of consultation, in order to inform one another on questions touching their joint interests.*

*Article 4. Neither of the two Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of Powers which is directly or indirectly against the other Party.*

*Article 5. In the event of disputes or disagreements arising between the Contracting Parties on questions of this or that kind, both Parties would clarify these disputes or disagreements exclusively by means of friendly exchange of opinion, or, if necessary, by arbitration committees.*

*Article 6. The present Agreement shall be concluded for a period of ten years on the understanding that, in so*

*far as one of the Contracting Parties does not give notice of termination one year before the end of this period, the period of validity of this Agreement shall automatically be regarded as prolonged for a further period of five years.*

*Article 7. The present Agreement shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Berlin, the Agreement takes effect immediately after it has been signed.*

*For the German Reich Government: RIBBENTROP*

*For the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: MOLOTOV"*

*Immediately after receiving news of this pact the British Government issued this official statement (August 23, 1939):*

*"The Cabinet at their meeting today considered the international situation in all its bearings. In addition to the reports that have been received as to military movements in Germany the Cabinet took note of the report that a non-aggression pact between the German and Soviet Governments was about to be concluded.*

*They had no hesitation in deciding that such an event would in no way affect their obligation to Poland which they have repeatedly stated in public and which they are determined to fulfill.*

*As the Prime Minister has repeatedly said, there are indeed no questions in Europe which should not be capable of peaceful solution if only conditions of confidence could be resolved.*

*His Majesty's Government are, as they always have been, ready to assist in creating such conditions, but if in spite of all their efforts others insist on the use of force they are prepared and determined to resist it to the uttermost."*

*On August 23, 1939 the Danzig Senate appointed Gauleiter Albert Forster as Head of the State.*

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\* For the secret protocol see p. 485

*On the same day President Roosevelt appealed to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy to formulate peace proposals.*

*On August 25, 1939 the Anglo-French Military Mission left Moscow, and on August 31, 1939 the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Russia was unanimously ratified by the Supreme Soviet in Moscow.*

*At the same time written statements were exchanged between Prime Minister Chamberlain and Hitler, which statements are summarized by Prime Minister Chamberlain and Viscount Halifax in their addresses as given below.*

THE PRIME MINISTER: . . . When at the beginning of this month hon. Members separated for the Summer Recess I think there can have been few among us who anticipated that many weeks would elapse before we should find ourselves meeting here again. Unfortunately, those anticipations have been fulfilled, and the Government have felt obliged to ask that Parliament should be summoned again, in order to take such new and drastic steps as are required by the gravity of the situation. In the last Debate which we had upon foreign affairs, which took place July 31,\* I observed that the Danzig situation required very careful watching. I expressed my anxiety about the pace at which the accumulation of war weapons was proceeding throughout Europe. I referred to the poisoning of public opinion by the propaganda which was going on, and I declared that if that could be stopped and if some action could be taken to restore confidence, I did not believe there was any question which could not be solved by peaceful discussion. I am sorry to say that there has been no sign since of any such action. On the contrary, the international position has steadily deteriorated until today we find ourselves confronted with the imminent peril of war.

At the beginning of August, a dispute arose between the Polish Government and the Danzig Senate as to the position and functions of certain Polish Customs officials. It was not a

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\* See No. 37.

question of major importance. Many more acute difficulties have been easily settled in the past under less tense conditions and even in this case discussions had actually begun between the parties last week. While those discussions were in progress, the German Press opened a violent campaign against the Polish Government. They declared that Danzig could not be the subject of any conference or any compromise and that it must come back to the Reich at once and unconditionally. They went further. They linked up with the Danzig question the question of the Corridor. They attacked the whole policy and the attitude of the Polish Government and they published circumstantial accounts of the alleged ill-treatment of Germans living in Poland. Now we have no means of checking the accuracy of those stories, but we cannot help being struck by the fact that they bear a strong resemblance to similar allegations that were made last year in respect of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia. We must also remember that there is a large Polish minority in Germany and that the treatment of that minority has also been the subject of bitter complaints by the Polish Government.

There is no subject which is calculated to arouse ill-feeling in any country more than the statements about the ill-treatment of people of their own race in another country. This is a subject which provides the most inflammable of all materials, the material most likely to cause a general conflagration. In those circumstances one cannot but deeply regret that such incidents, which, if they were established, would naturally excite sympathy for the victims and indignation against the authors of this alleged ill-treatment, should be treated in a way which is calculated still further to embitter the atmosphere and raise the temperature to the danger point. But I think it will be agreed that, in face of this campaign, declarations by Polish statesmen have shown great calm and self-restraint. The Polish leaders, while they have been firm in their determination to resist an attack upon their independence, have been unprovocative. They have always been ready, as I am sure they would be ready now, to discuss differences with the German Government, if they could be sure that those discussions would be carried on without threats of force or violence, and with

some confidence that, if agreement were reached, its terms would be respected afterwards permanently, both in the letter and in the spirit. This Press campaign is not the only symptom which is ominously reminiscent of past experience. Military preparations have been made in Germany on such a scale that that country is now in a condition of complete readiness for war, and at the beginning of this week we had word that German troops were beginning to move towards the Polish frontier. It then became evident that a crisis of the first magnitude was approaching, and the Government resolved that the time had come when they must seek the approval of Parliament for further measures of defense.

That was the situation on Tuesday last, when in Berlin and Moscow it was announced that negotiations had been taking place, and were likely soon to be concluded, for a non-aggression pact between those two countries. I do not attempt to conceal from the House that that announcement came to the Government as a surprise, and a surprise of a very unpleasant character. For some time past there had been rumors about an impending change in the relations between Germany and the Soviet Union, but no inkling of that change had been conveyed either to us or to the French Government by the Soviet Government. The House may remember that on July 31 I remarked that we had engaged upon steps almost unprecedented in character. I said that we had shown a great amount of trust and a strong desire to bring the negotiations with the Soviet Union to a successful conclusion when we agreed to send our soldiers, sailors and airmen to Russia to discuss military plans together before we had any assurance that we should be able to reach an agreement on political matters. Well, Sir, nevertheless, moved by the observation of the Russian Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that if we could come to a successful conclusion of our military discussions, political agreement should not present any insuperable difficulties, we sent the Mission.

The British and French Missions reached Moscow on August 11. They were warmly received, in friendly fashion, and discussions were actually in progress and had proceeded on a basis of mutual trust when this bombshell was flung down. It,

to say the least of it, was highly disturbing to learn that while these conversations were proceeding on that basis, the Soviet Government were secretly negotiating a pact with Germany for purposes which, on the face of it, were inconsistent with the objects of their foreign policy, as we had understood it. I do not propose this afternoon to pass any final judgment upon this incident. That, I think, would be premature until we have had an opportunity of consulting with the French Government as to the meaning and the consequences of this agreement, the text of which was published only this morning. But the question that the Government had to consider when they learned of this announcement was what effect if any, this changed situation would have upon their own policy. In Berlin, the announcement was hailed, with extraordinary cynicism, as a great diplomatic victory which removed any danger of war since we and France would no longer be likely to fulfill our obligations to Poland. We felt it our first duty to remove any such dangerous illusion.

The House will recollect that the guarantee which we had given to Poland was given before any agreement with Russia was talked of, and that it was not in any way made dependent upon any such agreement being reached. How then could we, with honor, go back upon such an obligation, which we had so often and so plainly repeated? Therefore, our first act was to issue a statement that our obligations to Poland and to other countries remained unaffected. Those obligations rest upon agreed statements made to the House of Commons, to which effect is being given in treaties which are at present in an advanced stage of negotiation. Those treaties, when concluded, will formally define our obligations, but they do not in any way alter, they do not add to or subtract from, the obligations of mutual assistance which have already been accepted. The communiqué which we issued to the Press after the meeting of the Cabinet this week spoke also of certain measures of defense which we had adopted. It will be remembered that, as I have said, Germany has an immense army of men already under arms and that military preparations of all kinds have been and are being carried on on a vast scale in that country.

The measures that we have taken up to now are of a precautionary and defensive character, and to give effect to our determination to put this country in a state of preparedness to meet any emergency, but I wish emphatically to repudiate any suggestion, if such a suggestion should be made, that these measures imply an act of menace. Nothing that we have done or that we propose to do menaces the legitimate interests of Germany. It is not an act of menace to prepare to help friends to defend themselves against force. If neighbors wishing to live together peacefully in friendly relations find that one of them is contemplating apparently an aggressive act of force against another of them, and is making open preparations for action, it is not a menace for the others to announce their intention of aiding the one who is the subject of this threat.

There is another action which has been taken today in the financial sphere. Hon. Members will have seen the announcement that the Bank Rate, which has remained at 2 per cent. for a long time past, has today been raised to 4 per cent, and the House will recognize that this is a normal protective measure adopted for the purpose of defending our resources in a period of uncertainty. There is in this connection a contribution to be made by British citizens generally. The public can best cooperate in reducing as far as possible any demands which involve directly or indirectly the purchase of foreign exchange; next by scrupulously observing the request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that capital should not at present be sent or moved out of the country; and finally, by holding no more foreign assets than are strictly required for the normal purpose of business.

In view of the attitude in Berlin to which I have already referred, His Majesty's Government felt that it was their duty at this moment to leave no possible loophole for misunderstanding, and so that no doubt might exist in the mind of the German Government His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to seek an interview with the German Chancellor and to hand him a message from me on behalf of the British Government. That message was delivered yesterday and the reply was received today. The object of my communication to

the German Chancellor was to restate our position and to make quite sure that there was no misunderstanding. His Majesty's Government felt that this was all the more necessary having regard to reports which we had received as to the military movements taking place in Germany and as to the then projected German-Soviet Agreement. I, therefore, made it plain, as had been done in the communiqué issued after the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, that if the case should arise His Majesty's Government were resolved and prepared to employ without delay all the forces at their command.

On numerous occasions I have stated my conviction that war between our two countries, admitted on all sides to be the greatest calamity that could occur, is not desired either by our own people or the German people. With this fact in mind I informed the German Chancellor that, in our view, there was nothing in the questions arising between Poland and Germany which could not be, and should not be, resolved without the use of force, if only a situation of confidence could be restored. We expressed our willingness to assist in creating the conditions in which such negotiations could take place. The present state of tension creates great difficulties, and I expressed the view that if there could be a truce on all sides to press polemics and all other forms of incitement suitable conditions might be established for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland upon the points at issue. The negotiations could, of course, deal also with the complaints made on either side about the protection of minorities.

The German Chancellor's reply includes what amounts to a re-statement of the German thesis that Eastern Europe is a sphere in which Germany ought to have a free hand. If we — this is the thesis — or any country having less direct interest choose to interfere, the blame for the ensuing conflict will be ours. This thesis entirely misapprehends the British position. We do not seek to claim a special position for ourselves in Eastern Europe. We do not think of asking Germany to sacrifice her national interests, but we cannot agree that national interests can only be secured by the shedding of blood or the destruction of the independence of other States. With regard



to the relations between Poland and Germany, the German Chancellor in his reply to me has referred again to the situation at Danzig, drawing attention to the position of that City and of the Corridor, and to the offer which he made early this year to settle these questions by methods of negotiation. I have repeatedly refuted the allegation that it was our guarantee to Poland that decided the Polish Government to refuse the proposals then made. That guarantee was not, in fact, given until after the Polish refusal had been conveyed to the German Government. In view of the delicacy of the situation I must refrain for the present from any further comment upon the communications which have just passed between the two Governments. Catastrophe has not yet come upon us. We must, therefore, still hope that reason and sanity may find a way to reassert themselves. The pronouncement we made recently and what I have said today reflects, I am sure, the views of the French Government, with whom we have maintained the customary close contact in pursuance of our well established cordial relations.

Naturally, our minds turn to the Dominions. I appreciate very warmly the pronouncements made by Ministers in other parts of the British Commonwealth. The indications that have been given from time to time, in some cases as recently as yesterday, of their sympathy with our patient efforts in the cause of peace, and of their attitude in the unhappy event of their proving unsuccessful, are a source of profound encouragement to us in these critical times. The House will, I am sure, share the appreciation with which His Majesty's Government have noted the appeal for peace made yesterday by King Leopold in the name of the heads of the Oslo States, after the meeting in Brussels yesterday of the representatives of those States. It will be evident from what I have said that His Majesty's Government share the hopes to which that appeal gave expression, and earnestly trust that effect will be given to it.

The Foreign Secretary, in a speech made on June 29 to the Royal Institute of International Affairs,\* set out the fun-

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\* See No. 38.

damental bases of British foreign policy. His observations on that subject, were, I believe, received with general approval.

The first basis is our determination to resist methods of force. The second basis is our recognition of the world desire to pursue the constructive work of building peace. If we were once satisfied, my Noble Friend said, that the intentions of others were the same as our own, and if we were satisfied that all wanted peaceful solution, then, indeed, we could discuss problems which are today causing the world so much anxiety. That definition of the basic fundamental ground of British policy still stands. We want to see established an international order based upon mutual understanding and mutual confidence, and we cannot build such an order unless it conforms to certain principles which are essential to the establishment of confidence and trust. Those principles must include the observance of international undertakings when they have once been entered into, and the renunciation of force in the settlement of differences. It is because those principles, to which we attach such vital importance, seem to us to be in jeopardy that we have undertaken these tremendous and unprecedented responsibilities.

If, despite all our efforts to find the way of peace — and God knows I have tried my best — if in spite of all that, we find ourselves forced to embark upon a struggle which is bound to be fraught with suffering and misery for all mankind, and the end of which no man can foresee, if that should happen, we shall not be fighting for the political future of a far away city in a foreign land; we shall be fighting for the preservation of those principles of which I have spoken, the destruction of which would involve the destruction of all possibility of peace and security for the peoples of the world. This issue of peace or war does not rest with us, and I trust that those with whom the responsibility does lie will think of the millions of human beings whose fate depends upon their actions. For ourselves, we have a united country behind us, and in this critical hour I believe that we, in this House of Commons, will stand together, and that this afternoon we shall show the world that, as we think, so we will act, as a united nation.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): Let me, in the first place, associate myself with the tribute which the Deputy-Leader of the Opposition paid to the firm, lucid and sombre speech of the Prime Minister. Like the right hon. Gentleman who preceded me, I do not wish to withdraw or abate one jot of the criticism which I have levelled against the policy of His Majesty's Government in the past, but a time when the liberties of Europe are being threatened by a thrust for world domination, when our own country is in danger, and when our homes and families are being deprived slowly, gradually, inexorably of the light and blessing of peace, is no time for controversy, and still less for recrimination. It is a time for closing our ranks and for a demonstration of unity and prompt action by Parliament, for in such a demonstration — would, Mr. Speaker, that it had been made a year ago — lies the last hope of convincing the aggressor of the firmness of our purpose and of deterring him from gambling on war for the achievement of his aims.

The reality behind the policy of Herr Hitler is his reliance upon force. First, for the maintenance of his own government at home. That imposes upon him the policy of representing force to the German people as the only means by which they can wrest the rightful heritage of a young and vigorous nation from what he affects to regard as the old and effete democracies like Britain and France today, and perhaps America tomorrow. It is not upon moral justification that he relies to secure the support of his people, but upon propaganda and upon success — success in the attainment of, apparently, limited objectives one after another — and he uses and discards political principles and ideas, such as the anti-Comintern Pact, and self-determination, just as it suits him either to gather friends and allies in a particular situation or to mask his real intentions and to bamboozle his opponents. What is at stake, therefore, in Herr Hitler's demand for Danzig is not some triviality which we could concede without damaging the interests of Britain. If we yield on that we should have to face, in the near future, further demands, each one more threatening to our vital interests, and we should have to face such demands,

weakened and discredited by our betrayal of the Poles, to whom the support of Britain is pledged in honor. We should be a nation upon whom our best friends and closest allies would hesitate to rely. With diminishing power and increasing loneliness, incapable of appealing to the conscience of the world in the name of freedom, law and justice, for which we should have proved ourselves unwilling to make sacrifices, we should have to await the onslaught of the dictatorships on the power and wealth of the British Empire and on the homes and liberties of our people.

It is yet too early to assess the precise value and significance, or to predict the duration, of the Russo-German Pact which was signed in Moscow this morning. Its clear implication, however, is that it is to the British Empire rather than to Russia that Herr Hitler will in future look for his territorial living space. If I might venture one further observation upon that Agreement it would be this. Article 2 reads as follows:

“If one of the contracting Powers should become the object of warlike action on the part of a third Power” — not aggression — nor apparently would it make any difference if the warlike action was the result of aggression against a third Power by Germany —

“the other contracting Power will in no way support the third Power.”

The conclusion of such an agreement with the Nazi Government by the Soviet Government at a time when the Soviet Government was strongly demanding the right to move troops through Poland in order to help to resist possible German aggression against that country is almost incomprehensible; but before coming to a final judgment we must, as the Prime Minister has said this afternoon, await the explanation which the Soviet Government will, no doubt, offer in due course to its own people and to the world.

Let me only say this in conclusion. I have been a steady and consistent critic of the Government's foreign policy, and nothing that has happened in recent weeks since the House rose has given me ground to withdraw my criticism. But now

that we are in a crisis, criticism must be put aside. We must rally on the ground of that Chatham House speech which the Prime Minister has just quoted to the House; with those two twin pillars of policy — determination to resist force on the one hand, and determination also to pursue the constructive work of building peace on the other. Now that His Majesty's Government in the exercise of a responsibility which none of us in the absence of full information can share, has decided on its course of action, any suggestion of hesitation, disunity or infirmity of purpose would encourage the enemies of peace in Germany. Let us give the world today, by speech and action, an impressive and convincing demonstration that, when the vital interests of our country, the moral values of civilized life and the peace of the world are menaced by brutal force, the British Parliament and the British people stand firmly with the people of France, without hatred or hostility towards the German or any other people, in the defense of these principles of international good faith, freedom and justice, on which alone we can establish lasting peace.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : I speak as a member of the Communist party, a party that has always stood for, and always will stand for, the defense of the people of this country, a party that has been in the forefront of the fight to maintain and protect the democratic rights so hardly won by the working class of this country, and a party that will continue in the forefront of that fight against aggression from without, no matter what the consequences may be. But at the moment Poland is in the centre of European events. The threat to Poland or to Polish independence is imminent. But Poland can be saved and peace maintained if an Anglo-Soviet Pact is signed and Poland changes her attitude towards Russia.

MR. W. A. ROBINSON (Lab.) : They have signed a Pact with the Fascists.

MR. GALLACHER: And if an Anglo-Soviet Pact is signed, that itself will cause immediately a change of attitude on the part of Poland. We are for peace, and we are for the unity of all the peace forces in order to maintain peace. We have never faltered in our view that the greatest obstacle to the unity of

the peace forces in this country and Europe is the present Government. Their policy has been a policy of tragedy and damnation for the peoples of Europe. We have had the betrayal and invasion of Austria, the open betrayal of republican Spain, which was sold to the Fascists, in the process of which British seamen were done to death.

MR. LOGAN (Lab.): What about that Pact?

MR. GALLACHER: I will come to that in a moment. Last year we had Munich; the betrayal of Czechoslovakia and the democracies of Europe. How much easier it would have been last year if the policy of this side had been adopted and a stand had been made against aggression before the bastions had fallen. The whole of these events have represented a period of the most gross and glaring double crossing [Interruption.] What of the new situation? Let us face it frankly and sanely. The Prime Minister has said that the Soviet Union have been making an agreement with Germany and that, he says, is inconsistent with Soviet policy as he understood it. It all depends on how the Prime Minister understood it. I declare here that the Non-Aggression Pact does not in any way interfere with the Anglo-Soviet pact of mutual assistance. I declare that you can take any of the articles of that pact and they do not affect in any way the situation in relation to the Franco-Soviet Pact. An attack on France by Germany would immediately bring the Franco-Soviet Pact into operation. There is no reason whatever why there should not be a pact of mutual assistance between Britain and Russia and Poland and Russia. The Non-Aggression Pact has been a terrific blow at the fifth column in this country. It is the fifth column that is squealing most.

MR. QUINTIN HOGG (C.): The Communist party is the fifth column.

MR. GALLACHER: The Prime Minister spoke of Soviet policy "as we understood it." In March of this year, Joseph Stalin made a very important speech. Will any hon. Member tell me how many newspapers in this country published that speech or how many hon. Members read it? Joseph Stalin said:

"The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit:

1. We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of this country.

2. We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighboring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R. That is our position and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the Soviet State."

I warn every hon. Member to pay attention to the third point: "We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country."

No. 4 says:

"We are not afraid of threats of aggression and are ready to deal two blows for every blow delivered by instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet policy."

Stalin says: "We are ready to come to the defense of countries whose independence is threatened." Who came to the assistance of China? Who came to the assistance of Spain? Who at the last moment offered to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia? Was it the British Government, or the "fifth column" which is so strongly represented in this House? No, it was Russia. Russia has proved that she is ready to take a stand in defense of those nations whose independence is threatened. Stalin made such a speech on March 10, and on March 15 we had such a serious event as the invasion of Prague. Why then was it not possible to have obtained immediately after that a pact of mutual assistance between this country and the Soviet Union? It was because the Prime Minister of this country did not want such a pact, and he does not want it now. How was it possible, if there was a serious desire for a pact, that a clerk should be sent across to negotiate, a clerk whose standing

and record in Russia were such as not to help negotiations? How was it possible to negotiate a pact in such circumstances? The right hon. Gentleman for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) said that this was a deliberate insult to a mighty Power. It is of the greatest importance, it is of decisive importance, that we get such a pact. . .

. . . This Non-Aggression Pact not only shows the importance of the Soviet Union in this situation, but it strikes a terrific blow against the activities of the fifth column in this and other countries. Learn that lesson, suppress for good the activities of the "fifth column," and let us get a Government — (An Hon. Member: 'What about Ribbentrop's column?') It is Ribbentrop's column which has been hit so hard on the solar plexus by this Non-Aggression Pact. It is Ribbentrop's column in this country which has been most insistent in putting up propaganda against an Anglo-Soviet pact. Its instructions were carried out through the Press and through innumerable organizations. "Do not have a pact with Russia." That was Ribbentrop's instruction to the fifth column, and while it was carrying out his instructions he went to Moscow to make this Non-Aggression Pact. In the meantime let us have in this country a Government which will express the will and desires of the peaceful and progressive forces, and if we have to face Fascist aggression and the hazard of war we are prepared to take a stand and play our part in defeating it.

MR. LOGAN (Lab.): . . . It was with a feeling of wonderment that I listened to the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher). If anyone can tell me where Russia stands, I should be glad to know. The tail has been wagging the body politic for a long time and it is time that people, even inside the Labor party, began to take notice. I am not so silly as not to understand the political movements of the day and yet, when I find those who were considered to be the best friends that could be found working hand in hand with the enemy and signing a pact with them, I am at a loss to understand where we are. I know there are apologists. I remember that Pilate made an apology when Judas betrayed Christ. We have today a Ju-



das in this business of the international situation. When I am spoken to of Poland am I to forget the indignities of the Russians to the Poles, and am I to forget Sobieski's great fight for them? The great travail of that country is before us today and our honor is at stake. Whether the Government represents or misrepresents the people is for the time being immaterial. The principle that we have to define and defend is the honor of this House. If we have to believe in constitutional power, if we have to believe in right against wrong, this forum has to make its declaration with all its responsibility. I say to some of my friends it is about time they began to reason, because, whatever school they went to, they cannot argue Yes and mean No. You have to mean something more definite than that.

When I have heard some of my friends, and also hon. Members below the Gangway, saying it would be wonderful if an alliance took place, I had my doubts about it, though I have not spoken because I did not want to disturb what might bring national security. Have we got national security? We have got national disunity. The people of the country do not know where they are. We have had a betrayal the like of which I have never known in the whole of my life nor in my reading of history. It is about time that our people began to grasp the truth. I am not concerned with young men who are flippant in speech. I want to tell the people the truth, and they ought to know it. The situation before us is serious. It is a question of the liberty of our people. It is a question of the franchise that they exercise in sending us here to make this a democratic institution for the welfare of the people, and it is because I want to defend any Government that may be here to hold power and authority for the British people that I say that, though I trust to God we may have no war, in defense of the weak, as a matter of honor, you will be bound to accept the challenge if it comes. I trust it may not come. I have walked through the hospitals and have seen the wounded and the dying, and I want to see nothing like that again. There is no use telling me that the cooing doves of Moscow or the wonderful emancipators of Berlin are any good to the human race. I detest them both. North, South, East and West, there is no difference between

them. That is what I have realized during the whole of my life. That is the philosophy in which I believe. If the English people cannot realize the tragedy of this, they are very much asleep. The sooner you begin to rely on your own strong arm the better.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.): ... Then I put this question: Is that further evidence of the Russian state of mind and the view of the Kremlin as to which policy they should pursue, to drive towards the ends and achieve the aims which they have in mind? Realizing that, I say to the Government that treachery — a thing which I abhor — of the most double-dyed kind has taken place on the part of the Kremlin in regard to the British and French nations. How can anyone conceive in inviting military, naval and air force leaders to a country and discussing with them problems of defense and probably pooling ideas, in circumstances of that kind? If we are to believe the conclusions of the past, there were spies in the Comintern at one time who were prepared to sell Russian secrets to Britain. Is it not possible, on the same analysis, that there may be some of the same kind there, who are prepared to sell the Allied plan to von Ribbentrop and Hitler, in order to bring about the destruction of the French and British nations? The Russians brought those representatives to their country and met them in friendship and discussed these matters with them when, at the same time, they were engaged in a contradictory policy. They said that they wanted to defend those who stood for peace against Fascist aggression. At the same time, they said to the Germans in spite of their alleged loathing for that people, "Will you come into my parlor?" — like the spider to the fly. They said, "We will welcome you and conclude a pact of non-aggression with you."

In the circumstances which I have indicated, Germany could say in all sincerity afterwards, "We have moved into Danzig and into the Corridor; it is our territory, it belongs to the Fatherland, the overwhelming majority of the people — in Danzig, at any rate — are Germans, and we are guilty of no act of aggression." They could say that they had begun this in order to develop their country and bring their own people

into the Reich, and, if Britain and France go to the defense of the Poles, Russia can then say that there has been no act of aggression which calls for her aid. In relation to Russia's aim I disagreed — not because I wanted to — with members of both the Labor party and the Liberty party about the aid that Russia would give in a war. I know there are people who have both misinterpreted and misunderstood my point of view, but I had it clearly in my mind. Even if you did conclude a pact with Russia it would, in my estimation, give no real aid. Russia is like the man who goes to the sea and proclaims that he is going in to bathe, but only paddles his feet in the water. That is all Russia would have done. She fans the flames. She would bring about the extended period of war, to which I have referred.

Today we have the position that the Swastika and the Hammer and Sickle fly side by side and that the free democratic nations are left to see the realization of this policy on the part of Russia. I leave that to the apologists of the Communist party. No doubt they can apologize for that as they can for almost anything under the sun. But what I want to know is: Does the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) serve West Fife in this House, or the Comintern? It is time that the people of West Fife realized whether they have sent him here to represent an outside Power or whether he speaks on behalf of the common people, the miners and their families, in West Fife or for the Comintern with the bloodstained hands — the murderous crew who run that institution against even the common people of Russia. I remember well the calls which were made by the Communist party, "Turn out in your tens of thousands in the London streets and, if you can, do physical violence to von Ribbentrop" — because the British Government had allowed him to come in. But now the scene is changed. Comrade Stalin and Comrade Ribbentrop shake hands — bloodstained hands in a mutual way, because both are dyed with the blood of Communists either of Russia, or of Germany — and they conclude a pact against the peace-loving Powers of the world. . .

MR. BEVAN (Lab.): . . . It must be present in the mind of

every Member of this House that a guarantee to Poland is very difficult of execution without the assistance of Russia. When the guarantee to Poland was discussed in the House, immediately after it was given, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) pointed out that the military assistance that Britain and France could render to Poland was very little indeed in the absence of an agreement with Russia, and the Prime Minister today expressed the view that it was still too early to form a final judgment on the actual nature of the undertaking entered into between Russia and Germany. I, therefore, want to ask whether it is not possible to start political negotiations with Russia immediately, in order to find out the actual position. I believe that, outside this House, people throughout the country will want to know why the negotiations with Russia were so prolonged, why they have broken down, and why it is that Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Secretary, could go to Moscow and no one of equal standing has been sent from Great Britain to Moscow. It is all very well for hon. Members to shout the usual cries in a crisis of this kind, but this will require some justification to the people of this country, who will want to know why millions of young British lads should lose their lives — lives which might have been saved if the policy of the Government, even now, were directed to a rapprochement with Russia.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, I am glad to accede to the invitation of the noble Lord opposite, and perhaps your Lordships will forgive me if I make a statement of somewhat greater length than is customary in answer to a formal question. It will perhaps be of some usefulness if I sketch in a word or two the background of the international developments which have led to the recall of Parliament. The events of this year are fresh in all our minds, and the cumulative effect of them had been to lead many countries of Europe to feel themselves confronted with an attempt on the part of Germany to dominate and control their

destiny, and there were few which had not reason to fear that their liberties were in greater or less degree in danger. As a matter of history, successive British Governments have felt obliged to resist attempts by a single Power to dominate Europe at the expense of others, and the imposition of one country's will by force of arms. This country has stood for the maintenance of the independence of those States who both valued their liberties and were ready to defend them, and have endeavored to uphold the principle that changes which must inevitably take place in the relations between nations can and should be effected peacefully and by free negotiation between those concerned.

His Majesty's Government accordingly entered into consultation with the countries who felt themselves to be more immediately threatened, for the sole purpose of concerting resistance to further aggression if such should be attempted. His Majesty's Government at the same time endeavored to make clear their attitude both by word and deed so that no doubt might anywhere exist as to the policy which they were determined to pursue. They introduced compulsory service and made efforts unprecedented in times of peace to expand and equip the armed forces of the Crown and to place both the civil and military defenses of the country in a state of full preparedness. The declarations of policy which have been made in this House and in another place have sought to set out both general principles of British policy and also the attitude of His Majesty's Government to particular questions, such as Danzig, which have from time to time held the forefront of the stage. The declarations which were thus made and the action which was taken met, I think, with the general approval both of Parliament and people.

Before the Adjournment early this month my right honorable friend the Prime Minister said that the situation, in which the accumulation of the weapons of war was going on at such a pace, was one which could not but be regarded with anxiety. He referred to the bad feeling which was being created by poisonous propaganda, and said that if that could be stopped and if some action could be taken to restore confidence in Eu-

rope, there was no question which should not be capable of solution by a peaceful means. Of such action, however, there has unhappily been no sign, and since the House adjourned the international situation has deteriorated, until today we are confronted with the imminent peril of war.

At the beginning of August further differences arose between the Polish Government and the Danzig Senate concerning the position and functions of the Polish Customs inspectors in the Free City. These differences were relatively unimportant in themselves and in an atmosphere of less tension would no doubt have been capable of being settled amicably, as similar differences have been settled in the past. Discussion of the questions at issue was in fact proceeding at the end of last week. But while efforts were being made to set the machinery of negotiation in motion, the German Press opened a violent campaign against the Polish Government. This campaign, as noble Lords may have noticed, was not confined solely, or even principally, to the question of Danzig. On this question it was stated that there could be no compromise: Danzig must return unconditionally to the Reich. With it was linked the question of the so-called Corridor, and the attack on Poland has extended to cover the general attitude and policy of the Polish Government, and in particular the position of the German minority in Poland.

In regard to the German minority I would say this. Every country must be concerned to secure just treatment for minorities, and must naturally feel particular interest in minorities allied to it by race. No one in this country, certainly, would wish to defend conditions under which such treatment was denied to any minority section, but if causes of complaint exist let them not be made the ground for such embitterment of the atmosphere as must make any settlement a hundred times more difficult, but let them be fairly and dispassionately brought to examination, so that before the public opinion of the world some ground may be established for their consideration and redress. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the accusations against Poland bear a strong resemblance to the accusations made last year against Czechoslovakia, and it is right also

to remember that there is a large Polish minority in Germany, of whose treatment the Polish Government also bitterly complain.

Of the general attitude of Poland it must be admitted, I think, that in the face of a campaign which appears to threaten not only their independence of action, but also the existence of Poland as a nation, the declarations of the Polish leaders have been firm but quite unprovocative. I am confident that they have been, and are at all times, ready to discuss the differences between themselves and Germany, if they could be reasonably certain that the discussion would take place under free conditions, without the menace of force, and with assurance that the results of the discussion would be loyally and permanently observed. If at times the Polish newspapers have replied in kind to the onslaught of the German Press, this has not been reflected in the attitude of the Polish Government. Concurrently with the Press campaign there has been much active military preparation in Germany, and that country is being placed on a footing of complete readiness for war. At the beginning of this week there were indications that German troops were moving towards the Polish frontiers, and, in the face of what was obviously becoming a very menacing situation, His Majesty's Government decided that the time had come when they must seek the approval of Parliament for further measures of defense.

That, in outline, was the situation when on August 22, the day before yesterday, it was officially stated in Berlin and Moscow that negotiations had been in progress, and were to be at once continued, for the signature of a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany. I do not conceal the fact that this announcement came as a surprise to His Majesty's Government. For some time past there had been rumors of a change in the relations between the German and Soviet Governments, but no hint of such a change was conveyed by the Soviet Government to His Majesty's Government or the French Government, with whom they were in negotiation; and on July 31 last the Prime Minister remarked in another place that His Majesty's Government were showing a great degree

of trust, and a strong desire to bring their negotiations with the Soviet Government to a successful issue, when, before any agreement had been finally reached on political matters, they agreed to send a Military Mission to Moscow to discuss military plans. The Military Missions of France and this country reached Moscow on August 11, and the conversations were proceeding to all appearance on a basis of mutual confidence, and it is, I do not conceal from your Lordships, certainly disturbing to learn that while these conversations were taking place the Soviet Government were secretly negotiating a pact with Germany for purposes which, on the face of it, were inconsistent with the objects, as we had understood them, of their foreign policy.

I would not now pass any final judgment on this matter. That would be premature until we have had time to consult with the French Government as to the meaning and the consequences of the agreement, the actual text of which has been published this morning, but one matter forces itself upon the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government. They had to consider what effect this changed situation should have on their policy. In Berlin the agreement was somewhat cynically welcomed as a great diplomatic victory which removed the danger of war, since, so it was alleged, Great Britain and France would no longer fulfill their obligations to Poland, and His Majesty's Government felt it their first duty to remove this dangerous illusion. It should be recalled, if it is not in mind, that our guarantee to Poland was given before any agreement with Russia was in prospect, and without condition that such agreement should be reached. His Majesty's Government therefore at once issued a statement that their obligations to Poland and other countries remained unaffected; and throughout these days, as noble Lords will imagine, we have been in close and constant contact with the French Government, whose attitude is identical with our own. Our obligations rest on the agreed statements which were made in this House and in another place, and which are binding. Effect is being given to them in treaties, which are in an advanced stage of negotiation, and these treaties will formally define the mu-



tual obligations of the parties, but they neither add to nor subtract from the obligations of mutual assistance which have been already accepted.

Certain necessary measures of precaution have already been taken. Some of these measures have already been announced, and other steps will be taken, as judged necessary, as soon as the legislation is passed which I understand it is proposed to invite your Lordships to consider this afternoon. There is another action which has been taken today in the financial sphere. Your Lordships will have seen the announcement that the bank rate, which has remained for a long time past at 2 per cent, has today been raised to 4 per cent. The House will recognize that this is a normal protective measure, which is adopted for the purpose of defending our resources in a period of uncertainty. There is, in this connection, a contribution to be made generally by British citizens. The public can best co-operate by reducing, so far as possible, any demands which involve, directly or indirectly, the purchase of foreign exchange; next, by scrupulously observing the Chancellor of the Exchequer's request that capital should not at present be sent or moved out of the country; and, finally, by holding no more foreign assets than are strictly required for the normal purpose of business.

My Lords, I have said that His Majesty's Government have tried to make their position quite clear, but, in order that no possible doubt might exist in the mind of the German Government, His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to seek an interview with Herr Hitler and to give him a message on His Majesty's Government's behalf. The object of this message to the German Chancellor was to restate our position and to make quite sure that there was no misunderstanding. His Majesty's Government, as I have suggested, felt that that was all the more necessary having regard to the reports which we had received as to the military movements in Germany and as to the then projected German-Soviet Agreement. My right honorable friend the Prime Minister, therefore, on behalf of His Majesty's Government made it plain, as had

indeed been made plain in the statement issued after the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday last, that if the case should arise His Majesty's Government were resolved and prepared to employ without delay all the forces at their command.

On numerous occasions the Prime Minister has stated his conviction, which is shared, I would suppose, by all people of this country, that war between the British and German peoples — admitted on all sides to be the greatest calamity that could occur — was not desired either by our people or by the German people. And the Prime Minister further informed the German Chancellor that we did not see that there was anything in the questions arising between Germany and Poland which could not and should not be resolved without the use of force, if only a situation of confidence could be restored. We have expressed our willingness to assist in creating the conditions in which such negotiations could take place. It was obvious that the present state of tension created great difficulties, and the Prime Minister expressed the view that if there could be a truce on all sides to Press polemics and all incitements a suitable condition might be established for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland upon the points between them. The negotiations could, of course, also deal with the complaints made on either side about the treatment of minorities.

The German Chancellor's reply includes what amounts to a restatement of the German thesis that Eastern Europe is a sphere in which Germany seeks to have a free hand; if we or any country having less direct interests choose to interfere, the blame for the ensuing conflict will be ours. The British position is, of course, that we do not in any way seek to claim a special position for ourselves; we do not think of asking Germany to sacrifice her national interests, but we do insist that the interests of other States should be respected. We cannot agree that national interests can only be secured by the shedding of blood or by the destruction of the independence of other States;\*and unfortunately events such as those of last March make it difficult to accept assurances, even now repeated, about the limitations of German interests. Herr Hitler has often

said that he has fought for a better Anglo-German understanding, but it has, as we see it, been the acts of Herr Hitler himself that have time and again destroyed our earnest and sincere endeavors to that end; and as regards relations between Germany and Poland, the German Chancellor has referred again to the situation at Danzig, drawing attention to the position of that City and of the Corridor, and to the offer which he made only this year to settle those questions by methods of negotiation. The allegation that it was our guarantee to Poland that decided the Polish Government to refuse the proposals then made has been repeatedly refuted. That guarantee was not in fact given until after the Polish refusal had been conveyed to the German Government.

My Lords, in view of the delicacy of the situation I would refrain at this time from any further comment upon the communications which have just passed between the two Governments. Catastrophe has not yet come upon Europe, and we must, therefore, still hope that reason and sanity may find means to reassert themselves. As to the military measures that we have taken, it must be remembered that, as I have said, Germany has already an immense number of men under arms, and has also made military preparations of all kinds on a vast scale. The measures taken in this country have so far been only of a precautionary and defensive kind, but no threats will affect our determination to do what is necessary to prepare the country for any emergency. I would with emphasis repudiate any suggestion that the measures we are taking imply a contemplated act of menace on our part. Nothing that we have done or propose to do constitutes a threat to any of Germany's legitimate interests. It is no act of menace to prepare oneself to help one's friends to defend themselves against the use of force.

In a speech that I made some six weeks or two months ago to the Royal Institute of International Affairs I tried to set out in terms which were fortunate enough to meet with almost unanimous approval the twin foundations of purpose on which British policy rests. The first was a determination to resist force, and the second was the recognition of the world's desire to get

on with the constructive task of building peace. And if we could once, as I said, be satisfied that the intentions of others were the same as our own, and that we all really wanted peaceful solutions, then, I said, we could discuss all the problems that were causing the world anxiety. That definition of the policy of His Majesty's Government stands. Our object is and has been, to build an international order based on mutual understanding and mutual confidence, but that order can only rest on the basis of certain moral principles which are widely recognized to be essential to the peaceful and the orderly life of nations, and among those principles I place high the renunciation of forcible solutions and the respect for the pledged word in international relationships. And, fundamentally, it is those principles which are today as we see it in danger, and it is those principles which we consider it vital to try and protect.

There are some who say that the fate of European nations is no concern of ours, and that we should not look far beyond our own frontiers. But those who thus argue forget, I think, that in failing to uphold the liberties of others we run great risk of betraying the principle of liberty itself, and with it our own freedom and independence. We have built up a society with values which are accepted not only in this country but over vast areas of the world. If we stand by and see these values set at nought the security of all those things on which life itself depends seems, to my judgment, to be undermined, and that is a fundamental matter on which I scarcely think that there will be any difference of opinion. I have no doubt that those with whom rest the issues of peace and war will measure their responsibilities to present and future generations before precipitating a struggle in which many nations of Europe must immediately be involved, of which the duration cannot be foreseen, and by which even those who stand aside from active participation will be vitally and dangerously affected. And I would earnestly hope that in face of all the certain consequences of a resort to force, and before any step is taken which cannot be retraced, reason may yet prevail. His Majesty's Government have noted with warm appreciation the appeal for peace made by King Leopold after the meeting at Brussels

yesterday in the name of the heads of the Oslo States.\* It will be evident from what I have said that His Majesty's Government share the hopes to which that appeal gave such moving expression, and earnestly trust that effect may be given to it.

My Lords, in this moment of anxiety I trust the ground on which His Majesty's Government have determined to take their stand will meet with the approval of all parties in this House. I believe it will, and I do not doubt that the Government may rely on the support of the whole country in any measures necessary to defend the cause of just dealing between the nations, and to preserve and secure the place of honorable freedom in the world.

LORD SNELL (Lab.) : My Lords, with your Lordships' permission I should like to express a very brief comment upon the most grave statement that has been made to the House by the noble Viscount. This is not the occasion for the use of any unnecessary words, and so far as the Labor Party is concerned no word will be used here today which will give any sort of comfort to those who are hoping to see in England a disunited country. Crises when they constitute a common danger to the community require that Party controversy should be suspended, and when such crises occur the solid sense of the British people rarely fails. One of these occasions is before us now, and now, as is the habit when danger threatens our people, we close our ranks and stand together as one people prepared, as I believe, if all other ways are indeed closed, to stake all that we are and have for the right as we see it and for the freedom of mankind from ruthless and brutal tyranny. The issue, my Lords, at stake is whether the freedom of Europe's peoples, built up by centuries of trial and of effort and of suffering, shall be preserved, or whether the tyrant shall henceforth rule over the earth. I have never in my life said one word in favor of war and I shall not do so on this occasion. I still

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\* On August 23, 1939, King Leopold of Belgium delivered a radio appeal, in Brussels, in the name of the heads of States which belong to the group of Oslo, namely: King of Denmark, President of Finland, Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, King of Norway, Queen of Holland, King of Sweden and himself, King of Belgium. This was an appeal to maintain peace and safety for their peoples.

hope that peace may be preserved. We believe, speaking for my noble friends on these Benches, that there are no questions which divide Germany and Poland that could not be settled by peaceful means, and we ask the Government to continue to try to secure a solution along those lines.

There is much that I should like to say, but I will confine my remarks to just one or two things. First of all, I feel that it is necessary for me to say, in justice to the record of my own Party, and to say with every kind of emphasis, that we here formally disavow all responsibility for a policy which has brought the nation to the precipice of a great disaster. Advice that we have continuously offered here and elsewhere has not indeed been ignored but it has been continuously derided and rejected. We now appear to be reaping what we have, if not designedly, at least insistently, sown. I prefer on this occasion to say no more than that, just pausing before I close to say a word about the surprise which the noble Viscount expressed in regard to the new Russian Treaty with Germany.

I feel that it is useless to say much in the absence of knowledge. To compute with accuracy and balance how the present situation has arisen is, at least for those of us without official information, quite impossible. We do not know either the mind or the motives of the Russian Government, but it does appear to us that there is a second retreat from Moscow which almost is as tragic as that which took place 127 years ago. I cannot finish without asking how it comes about that His Majesty's Government knew nothing of what was impending. As long ago as February last the Government knew that there were trade conversations going on between Germany and Russia, and they seem to have had no suspicion that behind that facade political talks might be proceeding. It leads one to wonder whether our Intelligence Service is of any value at all. It costs the nation a great deal of money.

In regard to Poland, the noble Viscount has not informed the House how and when support can be given. I thought he said that conversations were still proceeding in that matter. Therefore I will only content myself with expressing the hope, with the fate of Prague in our minds, that whatever promises

we have made will at least be honored. We have received with grave concern the statement which the noble Viscount has made with such calmness and dignity to your Lordships' House. We recognize its tragic significance. We urge the Government to continue until the last moment to try to secure peace by agreement. Then, if all our efforts fail, we shall at least have done our best; we shall have kept faith with our own conceptions of the right, and we can face with hope and with courageous resolution whatever may lie before us.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE (L.) My Lords, I desire on behalf of my noble friends to express our thanks to the noble Viscount opposite for the statement he has made in which he was the spokesman, not only of his own Front Bench but, I think, of all the Parties in the House and, as I believe, of the whole country. As his whole speech implied, it would be difficult to exaggerate the gravity of the situation in which we find ourselves and the main subject undoubtedly, as he stated, on which that gravity rests is the situation between Germany and Poland. I think it is just to say that the independence of Poland has now become part of the public law of Europe. Of all the territorial arrangements made at the conclusion of the War, two are outstanding as acts of international reparation for wrongs done in the past — the return of Lorraine to France and the rebirth of Poland. As everybody knows, it was 150 years before the Peace Treaty signed at the end of the War that the destruction of Poland began, and about 125 years before it was altogether complete. It is, I think, not uninteresting to note that, although the three great Powers concerned in the partition of Poland were all guilty in their different ways, historians have recorded that for perfidy and mendacity Prussia was the most guilty country of all. Since then the Fortunes of Poland have often been reconsidered. Prince Bismark expressed the opinion that it was impossible to recreate Poland because of the difficulty of Danzig. But in the War, in 1915 Germany, anxious to detach Poland from Russia, made a definite offer for the reconstruction of a new Poland. Now the wheel has come round and we find that the German Government, it is not too much to say, object to the actual existence

of Poland and would, quite possibly, be glad to restore the conditions which existed before 1914.

Now we understand that in Herr Hitler's reply to His Majesty's Government it is stated that the vital interests of Germany, especially in that portion of Europe, are no concern of any country except Germany itself. Our view of course is, and the view of His Majesty's Government undoubtedly is, that any question which vitally interests any country is a reasonable subject for international consideration and discussion. But where the German reply went on to say that we here in the West of Europe have no title to concern ourselves with any matters affecting Central Europe or the Eastern portion of the Continent, it would have been open to His Majesty's Government to inquire — not, of course, that they would wish to make a mere debating point — what conceivable interests Germany could have in such a western and southern country as Spain. That merely shows that the German reply is not intended in any sense to represent an argument but merely a downright statement of policy.

The noble Viscount alluded to the Russo-German Pact, of which we have seen an account in the newspapers. It is difficult exactly to comprehend its terms, because we do not know — at least, I do not know — in what language it is couched. There is no more fertile soil for misunderstanding than differences of interpretation in different languages. Indeed, it often happens that words which appear to have an almost identical meaning in two languages have in fact a quite different meaning. We saw in the papers the phrase that if one of the contracting parties became the object of warlike action by a third Power, the other contracting party would not assist the third Power. That may mean two quite different things. "The object of warlike action" may mean the subject of aggression, or alternatively it may be taken to mean engaged in hostilities in any circumstances. Until that is shown one way or the other, I should greatly prefer to think that the object of Russia in concluding this agreement is to preserve the peace rather than to encourage a possible outbreak of war. . .



#### 44. LAST DAYS BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR. ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT (AUGUST 29, 1939)\*

ON AUGUST 25, 1939 Hitler made the following communication to the British Ambassador in Berlin Sir Neville Henderson:

*"1. Poland's actual provocations have become intolerable. It makes no difference who is responsible. If the Polish Government denies responsibility, that only goes to show that it no longer itself possesses any influence over its subordinate military authorities. In the preceding night there had been a further twenty-one new frontier incidents; on the German side the greatest discipline had been maintained. All incidents had been provoked from the Polish side. Furthermore, commercial aircraft had been shot at. If the Polish Government stated that it was not responsible, it showed that it was no longer capable of controlling its own people.*

*2. Germany was in all the circumstances determined to abolish these Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier and, what is more, to do so in the interests of quiet and order, but also in the interests of European peace.*

*3. The problem of Danzig and the Corridor must be solved. — The British Prime Minister had made a speech which was not in the least calculated to induce any change in the German attitude. At the most, the result of this speech could be a bloody and incalculable war between Germany and England. Such a war would be bloodier than that of 1914 to 1918. In contrast to the last*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 111-122. House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 907-910.

war, Germany would no longer have to fight on two fronts. Agreement with Russia was unconditional and signified a change in foreign policy of the Reich which would last a very long time. Russia and Germany would never again take up arms against each other. Apart from this, the agreements reached with Russia would also render Germany secure economically for the longest possible period of war.

The Führer had always wanted an Anglo-German understanding. War between England and Germany could at the best bring some profit to Germany but none at all to England.

The Führer declared that the German-Polish problem must be solved and will be solved. He is, however, prepared and determined after the solution of this problem to approach England once more with a large comprehensive offer. He is a man of great decisions, and in this case also he will be capable of being great in his action. He accepts the British Empire and is ready to pledge himself personally for its continued existence and to place the power of the German Reich at its disposal if —

1. His colonial demands which are limited and can be negotiated by peaceful methods are fulfilled and in this case he is prepared to fix the longest time limit.
2. His obligations toward Italy are not touched; in other words, he does not demand that England give up her obligations towards France and similarly for his own part he cannot withdraw from his obligations towards Italy.
3. He also desires to stress the irrevocable determination of Germany never again to enter into conflict with Russia. The Führer is ready to conclude agreements with England which, as has already been emphasized would not only guarantee the existence of the British Empire in all circumstances as far as Germany is concerned, but also if necessary an assurance to the British Empire of German assistance

*regardless of where such assistance should be necessary. The Führer would then also be ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments which corresponds to the new political situation, and which is economically tolerable. Finally, the Führer renewed his assurances that he is not interested in Western problems and that a frontier modification in the West does not enter into consideration. Western fortifications which have been constructed at a cost of milliards were final Reich frontier on the West.*

*If the British Government would consider these ideas a blessing for Germany and also for the British Empire might result. If it rejects these ideas there will be war. In no case would Great Britain emerge stronger; the last war proved this.*

*The Führer repeats that he is a man of ad infinitum decisions by which he himself is bound and that this is his last offer. Immediately after solution of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer."*

*On August 28, 1939 the following answer was given by the British Government to the declarations of Chancellor Hitler on August 23 and August 25, 1939:*

*"His Majesty's Government have received the message conveyed to them from the German Chancellor by His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin, and have considered it with the care which it demands.*

*They note the Chancellor's expression of his desire to make friendship the basis of the relations between Germany and the British Empire and they fully share this desire. They believe with him that if a complete and lasting understanding between the two countries could be established it would bring untold blessings to both peoples.*

*2. The Chancellor's message deals with two groups of questions: those which are the matters now in dispute between Germany and Poland and those affecting the ul-*

*timate relations of Germany and Great Britain. In connexion with these last, His Majesty's Government observe that the German Chancellor has indicated certain proposals which, subject to one condition, he would be prepared to make to the British Government for a general understanding. These proposals are, of course, stated in very general form and would require closer definition, but His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion and they would be ready, if the differences between Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed as soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement.*

*3. The condition which the German Chancellor lays down is that there must first be a settlement of the differences between Germany and Poland. As to that, His Majesty's Government entirely agree. Everything, however, turns upon the nature of the settlement and the method by which it is to be reached. On these points, the importance of which cannot be absent from the Chancellor's mind, his message is silent, and His Majesty's Government feel compelled to point out that an understanding upon both of these is essential to achieving further progress. The German Government will be aware that His Majesty's Government have obligations to Poland by which they are bound and which they intend to honor. They could not, for any advantage offered to Great Britain, acquiesce in a settlement which put in jeopardy the independence of a State to whom they have given their guarantee.*

*4. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government a reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could and should be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests, and they recall that in his speech of April 28 the German Chancellor recognized the importance of these interests to Poland.*

*But, as was stated by the Prime Minister in his letter to the German Chancellor of August 22, His Majesty's Government consider it essential for the success of the discussions which would precede the agreement that it should be understood beforehand that any settlement arrived at would be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready if desired to make their contribution to the effective operation of such a guarantee.*

*In the view of His Majesty's Government it follows that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments on a basis which would include the principles stated above, namely, the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests and the securing of the settlement by an international guarantee.*

*They have already received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they are prepared to enter into discussions on this basis, and His Majesty's Government hope, the German Government would for their part also be willing to agree to this course.*

*If, as His Majesty's Government hope, such discussion led to agreement the way would be open to the negotiation of that wider and more complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany which both countries desire.*

5. *His Majesty's Government agree with the German Chancellor that one of the principal dangers in the German-Polish situation arises from the reports concerning the treatment of minorities. The present state of tension, with its concomitant frontier incidents, reports of maltreatment and inflammatory propaganda, is a constant danger to peace. It is manifestly a matter of the utmost urgency that all incidents of the kind should be promptly and rigidly suppressed and that unverified reports should not be allowed to circulate, in order that time may be afforded, without provocation on either side, for a full examination of the possibilities of settlement. His*

*Majesty's Government are confident that both the Governments concerned are fully alive to these considerations.*

6. *His Majesty's Government have said enough to make their own attitude plain in the particular matters at issue between Germany and Poland. They trust that the German Chancellor will not think that, because His Majesty's Government are scrupulous concerning their obligations to Poland, they are not anxious to use all their influence to assist the achievement of a solution which may commend itself both to Germany and to Poland.*

*That such a settlement should be achieved seems to His Majesty's Government essential, not only for reasons directly arising in regard to the settlement itself, but also because of the wider considerations of which the German Chancellor has spoken with such conviction.*

7. *It is unnecessary in the present reply to stress the advantage of a peaceful settlement over a decision to settle the questions at issue by force of arms. The results of a decision to use force have been clearly set out in the Prime Minister's letter to the Chancellor of August 22, and His Majesty's Government do no doubt that they are as fully recognized by the Chancellor as by themselves.*

*On the other hand, His Majesty's Government, noting with interest the German Chancellor's reference in the message now under consideration to a limitation of armaments, believe that, if a peaceful settlement can be obtained, the assistance of the world could confidently be anticipated for practical measures to enable the transition from preparation for war to the normal activities of peaceful trade to be safely and smoothly effected.*

8. *A just settlement of these questions between Germany and Poland may open the way to world peace. Failure to reach it would ruin the hopes of better understanding between Germany and Great Britain, would bring the two countries into conflict, and might well*

*plunge the whole world into war. Such an outcome would be a calamity without parallel in history."*

*In the meantime, on August 25, 1939, the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance was signed in London. The text reads as follows:*

**ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT OF  
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE.**

*London, August 25, 1939.*

*The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Polish Government,*

*Desiring to place on a permanent basis the collaboration between their respective countries resulting from the assurances of mutual assistance of a defensive character which they have already exchanged;*

*Have resolved to conclude an Agreement for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:*

*The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:*

*The Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;*

*The Polish Government:*

*His Excellency Count Edward Raczynski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Polish Republic in London;*

*Who, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:*

**ARTICLE 1**

*Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power.*

**ARTICLE 2**

*(1) The provisions of Article 1 will also apply in*

*the event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and was of such a nature that the Party in question considered it vital to resist it with its armed forces.*

*(2) Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that Contracting Party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.*

#### ARTICLE 3

*Should a European power attempt to undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by process of economic penetration or in any other way, the Contracting Parties will support each other in resistance to such attempts. Should the European Power concerned thereupon embark on hostilities against one of the Contracting parties the provisions of Article 1 will apply.*

#### ARTICLE 4

*The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent naval, military and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.*

#### ARTICLE 5

*Without prejudice to the foregoing undertakings of the Contracting Parties to give each other mutual support and assistance immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, they will exchange complete and speedy information concerning any development which might threaten their independence and, in particular, concerning any development which threatened to call the said undertakings into operation.*

#### ARTICLE 6

*(1) The Contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance*



*against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.*

*(2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.*

*(3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in these undertakings and the third State concerned.*

#### ARTICLE 7

*Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.*

#### ARTICLE 8

*(1) The present Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years.*

*(2) Unless denounced six months before the expiry of this period it shall continue in force, each Contracting Party having thereafter the right to denounce it at any time by giving six months' notice to that effect.*

*(3) The present Agreement shall come into force on signature.*

*In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.*

*Done in English in duplicate, at London, August 25, 1939. A Polish text shall subsequently be agreed upon between the Contracting Parties and both texts will then be authentic.*

(L.S.) HALIFAX

(L.S.) EDWARD RACZYNSKI

*On the same day the following secret protocol\* to the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance was signed:*

*"The Polish Government and Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland are agreed upon the following interpretation of the Agreement of Mutual Assistance signed this day as alone authentic and binding:*

*1. A] By the expression 'European Power' employed in the Agreement is to be understood Germany.*

*B] In the event of action within the meaning of Articles 1 or 2 of the Agreement by a European power other than Germany, the contracting parties will consult together on the measures to be taken in common.*

*2. A] The two Governments will from time to time determine by mutual agreement hypothetical cases of action by Germany, coming within the ambit of Article 2 of the Agreement.*

*B] Until such time as the two Governments have agreed to modify the following provisions of this paragraph they will consider: that the case contemplated by Paragraph 1 of Article 2 of the Agreement is that of the Free City of Danzig; and that the cases contemplated by Paragraph 2 of Article 2 are Belgium, Holland and Lithuania.*

*C] Latvia and Estonia shall be regarded by the two Governments as included in the list of countries contemplated by paragraph 2 of Article 2 from the moment that an undertaking of mutual assistance between the United Kingdom and a third State, covering these two countries enters into force.*

*D] As regards Rumania, the Government of the United Kingdom refers to the guarantee which it has given to that country; and the Polish Government refers to the reciprocal undertakings of the Rumano-Polish Alliance, which Poland has never regarded as incompatible with her traditional friendship for Hungary.*

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\* Not published until April, 1945.

3. *The undertakings mentioned in Article 6 of the Agreement, should they be entered into by one of the contracting parties with a third state, would of necessity be so framed that their execution should at no time prejudice either the sovereignty or territorial inviolability of the other contracting party.*

4. *The present protocol constitutes an integral part of the Agreement signed this day, scope of which does not exceed it.*

*In faith whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed the present protocol.*

*Done in English in duplicate at London, August 25, 1939. The Polish text will subsequently be agreed upon between the contracting parties, and both will then be authentic. Signed: Halifax. Signed: Edward Raczyński."*

*On August 24, 1939, the Pope made a radio appeal for peace. On the same day President Roosevelt sent messages to Herr Hitler and the President of Poland with an appeal for a peaceful solution of the problems between Germany and Poland. On August 25, 1939, President Moscicki of Poland gave the following answer:*

*"I appreciate the noble message which your Excellency has been kind enough to send me. I should like to emphasize that the Polish Government have ever considered direct talks between Governments to be the most suitable method of resolving difficulties which may arise between States. We consider that this method is all the more suitable where neighboring States are concerned. On the basis of these principles Poland concluded non-aggression pacts with Germany and Russia. We consider also that the method of conciliation through the intermediary of a disinterested and impartial third party is a just method of resolving differences which have been created between nations.*

*Although I clearly wish to avoid even the appearance of desiring to profit by this occasion to raise points of li-*

*tigation, I deem it my duty, nevertheless, to make clear that in the present crisis it is not Poland which is formulating demands and demanding concessions of any other State. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that Poland should hold aloof from any action of this kind, direct or indirect. I would like to close by expressing my ardent wish that your message of peace may contribute to a general appeasement which is so necessary to enable the nations once more to regain the blessed path of progress and civilization."*

*Also on the same day, August 25, 1939, President Roosevelt sent a second appeal to Herr Hitler. The text is as follows:*

*"... The President of Poland has made it plain that the Polish Government is willing, upon the basis set forth in my message, to agree to solve the controversy which has arisen between the Republic of Poland and the German Reich by direct negotiation or the process of conciliation.*

*Countless human lives can yet be saved and hope may still be restored that the nations of the modern world may even now construct the foundation for a peaceful and happier relationship if you and the Government of the German Reich will agree to the pacific means of settlement accepted by the Government of Poland. All the world prays that Germany, too, will accept."*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): Since the House met on Thursday last\* there has been little change in the main features of the situation. The catastrophe, as I said then, is not yet on us, but I cannot say that the danger of it has yet in any way receded. In these circumstances it might perhaps have seemed that it was unnecessary to ask the House to meet again before the date which had been fixed, but in times like these we have felt that it was right that the House should be kept as far as possible continuously informed of all

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\* August 24, 1939. See No. 43.

the developments in the situation as they took place. That will continue to be the principle which will guide us in further meetings of this House.

There is one thing that I would like to say at this moment with regard to the Press. I think it is necessary once more to urge the Press to exercise the utmost restraint at a time when it is quite possible for a few thoughtless words in a paper, perhaps not of particular importance, to wreck the whole of the efforts which are being made by the Government to obtain a satisfactory solution. I have heard that an account purporting to be a verbatim description of the communication of the British Government to Herr Hitler was telegraphed to another country last night or this morning. Such an account could only be an invention from beginning to end. It is, I think, very unfortunate that journalists in the exercise of their profession should take such responsibilities upon themselves, responsibilities which affect not only themselves, but the inhabitants, perhaps, of all the countries in the world.

I hope that it will not be necessary this afternoon to have any long Debate. I will attempt to give the House an account of the events of the last few days, but, of course, there has been no change in the policy of the Government, and, therefore, there would not appear to be any necessity for any lengthy discussion. On the day after the House adjourned — on Friday, (August 25) that is — we received information in the course of the morning that the German Chancellor had asked the British Ambassador in Berlin to call upon him at half-past one that day, and in the course of the afternoon we were told by telephone that Sir Neville Henderson had had an interview lasting about an hour and a half with Herr Hitler, that he was sending us an account of that interview, and that Herr Hitler had suggested to him that it would be a good thing if he were to fly over to this country the next morning in order to give us a verbal and more extended account of the conversation. We received the record of the interview from our Ambassador on that evening, on Friday evening, but it was not completely deciphered until after midnight, and I did not myself see the whole of it until the next morning, Saturday morn-

ing. On Saturday (August 26) Sir Neville Henderson arrived by plane from Berlin shortly before lunch, and we understood from him that in Berlin it was not considered to be necessary that he should go back the same day, as the German Government were anxious that we should give careful study to the communication he had to make to us. Accordingly, we devoted the whole of Saturday and the Sunday (August 27) morning to a very careful, exhaustive and thorough consideration of the document which was brought to us by the British Ambassador and of the reply that we proposed to send back, and our final answer was taken by the Ambassador yesterday afternoon, when he flew back to Berlin and delivered it to the Chancellor last night.

I should be glad if I could disclose to the House the fullest information as to the contents of the communications exchanged with Herr Hitler, but hon. Members will understand that in a situation of such extreme delicacy, and when issues so grave hang precariously in the balance, it is not in the public interest to publish these confidential communications or to comment on them in detail at this stage. I am, however, able to indicate in quite general terms some of the main points with which they deal. Herr Hitler was concerned to impress upon His Majesty's Government his wish for an Anglo-German understanding of a complete and lasting character. On the other hand, he left His Majesty's Government in no doubt of his views as to the urgency of settling the German-Polish question. His Majesty's Government have also frequently expressed their desire to see the realization of such an Anglo-German understanding, and as soon as circumstances permit they would naturally welcome an opportunity of discussing with Germany the several issues a settlement of which would have to find a place in any permanent agreement. But everything turns upon the manner in which the immediate differences between Germany and Poland can be handled and the nature of the proposals which might be made for any settlement. We have made it plain that our obligations to Poland, cast into formal shape by the agreement which was signed on August 25, on Friday last, will be carried out. The House will remember that the Government

have said more than once, publicly, that the German-Polish differences should be capable of solution by peaceful means.

Meanwhile, the first prerequisite, if there is to be any general and useful discussion, is that the tension created by frontier clashes and by reports of incidents on both sides of the border should be diminished. His Majesty's Government accordingly hope that both Governments will use their best endeavors to prevent the occurrence of such incidents, the circulation of exaggerated reports, and all other activities that result in dangerous inflammation of opinion. His Majesty's Government would hope that if an equitable settlement of Polish-German differences could be reached by free negotiation, this might in turn lead on to a wider agreement which would accrue to the lasting benefit of Europe and of the world at large. At this moment the position is that we are waiting for the reply of Herr Hitler to our communication. On the nature of that reply depends whether further time can be given for the exploration of the situation and for the operation of the many forces which are working for peace. A waiting period of that kind is often very trying, but nothing, I think, can be more remarkable than the calm which characterizes the attitude of the whole British people. It seems to me that there are two explanations of that attitude. The first is that none of us has any doubt of where our duty lies. There is no difference of opinion among us; there is no weakening of our determination. The second explanation is our confidence that we are ready for any eventuality.

The House might like to hear one or two particulars of the preparations which have been made. Obviously, there are many things which I cannot very well say here because they could not be confined to those whom I see before me. My statement must, therefore, be in very general terms. Some of the measures which we had to take, such as those in connection with requisitioning, necessarily must cause some degree of inconvenience to the public. I am confident that the people of the country generally recognize that the nation's needs must now be paramount and that they will submit willingly, and even cheerfully, to any inconvenience or hardships that may be in-

volved. At any rate, we have not had to begin here by issuing rationing cards. To deal first with the active defense of the country, the Air Defense of Great Britain has been placed in a state of instant readiness. The ground anti-aircraft defenses have been deployed and they are manned by Territorial anti-aircraft units. The regular squadrons of the Royal Air Force have been brought up to war strength by the addition of the necessary reservists, including a portion of the Volunteer Reserve. The fighter and general reconnaissance squadrons of the Auxiliary Air Force have been called up and are standing ready and the balloon barrage is in position. The Observer Corps are at their posts, and, indeed, the whole warning system is ready night and day to be brought into instant operation. The coast defenses are ready and are manned by the coast defense units of the Territorial Army. Arrangements have also been made for the protection by the National Defense companies, by the Militia and by units of the Territorial Army of a very large number of important points whose safety is essential for the national war effort.

As to the Navy, the House will remember that in July last it was announced that the Reserve Fleet would be called up at the beginning of August in order to take part in combined Fleet and Air exercises. For that purpose a number of reservists were called up under the provisions of the Reserves and Auxiliary Forces Act. As a result, the Navy was in an advanced state of preparedness when the present crisis arose, and the whole of our fighting Fleet is now ready at a moment's notice to take up the dispositions which would be necessary in war. A number of other measures have been taken during the past week to increase the state of our naval preparedness. I need not go into all the details, but the naval officers in charge of the various commercial ports have been appointed and have taken up their duties, and the naval ports and bases have been put into an advanced state of preparedness. As hon. Members will be aware, the Admiralty has also assumed control of merchant shipping acting under the powers conferred by the Emergency Powers Act, and written instructions have already been issued to merchant shipping on various routes. A con-



siderable number of movements have been carried out of units of the armed land forces both at home and overseas. These movements are part of pre-arranged plans to provide that in order to ensure a greater state of readiness a number of units should, if possible, move to their war stations before the outbreak of war. The Civil Defense regional organization has been placed on war footing. Regional commissioners and their staffs are at their war stations.

The main responsibility for the organization of Civil Defense measures generally rests with the local authorities. Instructions have been sent to the local authorities to complete all the preparatory steps so that action can be taken at the shortest notice. Plans for the evacuation of school children, mothers with young children, expectant mothers and blind persons from certain congested areas — plans which have involved an immense amount of detailed thinking — are ready. Those who have to carry out those plans have been recalled for duty, school teachers in evacuation areas have been kept in easy reach of school assembly points since Saturday, and a rehearsal of the arrangements for evacuating school children was carried out yesterday. Nearly a week ago local authorities were warned to make arrangements for the extinction of public lighting and to prepare the necessary aids to movement when the lighting has been extinguished. Arrangements have been completed for calling up at very short notice the personnel of the Air-Raid Precautions Service, and duty officers are available throughout the 24 hours at key posts. The last item I mention is that the necessary preliminary steps have been taken to prepare hospitals for the reception of casualties. ,

I have given a number of instances of steps which have been taken over and above the measures which have already been put into operation. A complete and continuous survey is being carried out over the whole range of our defense preparations, and preparatory measures are being taken in order to ensure that further precautionary measures, if and when they should be found necessary, can be given effect to as rapidly as possible. The instances I have given to the House are merely illustrations of the general state of readiness, of which the

House and the country are aware. I think that they justify and partly account for the general absence of fear, or, indeed, of any violent emotion. The British people are said sometimes to be slow to make up their minds, but, having made them up, they do not readily let go. The issue of peace or war is still undecided, and we still will hope, and still will work, for peace; but we will abate no jot of our resolution to hold fast to the line which we have laid down for ourselves.

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD (Lab.): We meet again today to hear a statement on the changing international scene. This is not a day the value of which can be counted by the number of words that are uttered, but by the pregnancy of the meaning of the words that are uttered, and though the international scene may change kaleidoscopically, whatever else may change my party's inflexible determination to defend liberty, to uphold the rule of law against the arbitrary use of force, still remains. In the most emphatic words I wish to say that, so far as we are concerned, aggression must cease now. Poland will not be allowed to follow to the grave those nations that were martyred by the aggressors. Our determination once and for all is that threats, menaces and open aggression shall come to an end. What I said last week I stand by today in the name of my party. Our spirit has not weakened; our spirit has deepened. On this issue we are adamant and immovable, and he who today, whether on those benches opposite or outside in this country, or abroad, would dishonor the pledges which have been given, endorsed, re-endorsed and endorsed again, would be a traitor to the peace and freedom of the world.

The door is still ajar. The Prime Minister has told us that a further reply may be expected from the German Chancellor. I hope the door will remain ajar until it closes with the angel of death and the monster of aggression outside the threshold for ever. It is to be hoped — we long and we pray for it — that the holocaust will be avoided, but should it be otherwise the responsibility will rest on the shoulders of one man. I quote, as an illustration of that, President Roosevelt's appeal to Poland and to Germany. To that appeal there was a magnificent re-

sponse by Poland, showing every sincerity in their desire to avoid the worst and to come to a solution of their difficulties by peaceful means. Herr Hitler has not replied. On his shoulders lies the responsibility for the making of war. No nation in Europe — no nation in Europe — will make war except one — [An Hon. Member: "Name it!"] — no nation in Europe, and, therefore, there will be no war unless Herr Hitler wills it. If it can in honor be avoided, it must be. And then with this horrible nightmare behind us, it will be the duty of the statesmen of the world to head mankind towards peace and to create an atmosphere and conditions in which the problems of mankind can be settled by peaceful discussion and honest co-operation. But only on the understanding that aggression has ceased finally and for ever.

It has been since the end of the last Great War the unwavering policy of my party to build up permanent peace, and, if the present situation can be resolved, a new chapter in world history will have been opened; and perhaps the mental agonies through which we have been passing will have been worth while if we have learned their lessons. In that event Labor will make its constructive proposals for the permanent preservation of peace and freedom. I was glad that the right hon. Gentleman has told us, and told the world, that we are not unprepared. I am grateful for that statement. I think it is as well that our own people should know, I think it is as well that those nations in Europe which might be involved should also know, that while we strive for peace we are leaving no stone unturned to meet the situation should the fateful blow fall.

The right hon. Gentleman told us about preparedness with regard to evacuation. On that I want to make a very special appeal to him. On this side we have, during the past three years, pressed hard for adequate measures with regard to air-raid precautions, and especially with regard to evacuation. There is no man in this country who has pressed this matter and has himself done more than my right hon. Friend the Member for South Hackney (Mr. H. Morrison). We have pressed these things. The question which I want to put to the Prime

Minister is this: Is preparation enough? As I understand it, it may be two or three days, or perhaps four days, before evacuation can take place to the extent which is visualized in the great centres of the population. Suppose — and one lives from hour to hour in these days — the storm breaks on Saturday. Unless we evacuate now, the responsibility for the deaths which are caused will lie upon that side of the House and not upon us.

The right hon. Gentleman told us that the people are calm. The people of this country are calm. The atmosphere today is enormously different from the atmosphere of a year ago. The people would not be scared if the order for evacuation went out tomorrow morning, and this House would then feel that it had done all that it could to protect the lives of people — of nursing mothers, or cripples and of the blind people who, in the nature of things, cannot help themselves. I would press this point upon the Prime Minister. I do not understand the reluctance somewhere on that side to say the word. The point is this: Although the Lord Privy Seal has worked like a Trojan in this matter, he has worked to cover up the sins and the delinquencies of two previous years; but are we yet satisfied that if the bombs began to rain on any city now, evacuation would be successful? In this country, evacuation is an entirely new problem. We are working theoretically, but rehearsals are not enough.

I say to the Prime Minister that were it to cost £10,000,000, £20,000,000, £30,000,000 or even £50,000,000; and if we were to bring the people back in a week — we should all be glad if it were so — the experience would have been worth it. I am satisfied that until you do evacuate seriously you will not know the defects in your organization and that from a week of actual evacuation you would learn more of the problem that you had to face and the weaknesses in the machine than you could ever learn by partial rehearsals and by people sitting in offices and thinking things out. I hope that the Prime Minister will take that point of view, that evacuation now might be carried out before the blow falls, and that evacuation afterwards would be a disaster in the state of confusion which would exist. If the blow did not fall it would be one of

the finest pieces of national insurance on which we could engage.

I have said that I did not think that length of speech was an asset upon an occasion of this kind, and I hope to set an example of that nature, as I have said on previous occasions. I end, therefore, with two sentences. It is everybody's desire that the negotiations which are now proceeding should be successful on the line of justice and honor. Should they fail, those who have created a new situation will meet with an irresistible, iron determination in this country to end aggression for ever.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): ...The Prime Minister warned us in his opening speech that while catastrophe was not yet upon us, he could not say that the menace has receded; at the same time he appealed to the Press to preserve an attitude of restraint. Certainly, my hon. Friends and I feel sure hon. Members in all parts of the House would wish to be associated with that appeal; but I think the Prime Minister will not resent it if I say that it is not only one particular kind of newspaper, not only the popular newspaper, which has grievously erred in recent days. I would also ask the House to consider the immense responsibility — I know this is in the mind of the Prime Minister, and I am not suggesting that there is any difference between him and me on this point — which rests upon the editors of newspapers at the present time, of having to deal with news coming in from all quarters of the globe, with the public thirsting for information and with the newspaper staffs depleted as they are at the present time by the calls of national service. This is one reason, although perhaps not the most important reason, why I welcomed the assurance which the Prime Minister has given us this afternoon that he wants during this critical time to keep in the closest association and co-operation with the House of Commons, because I know, from having talked with responsible editors of newspapers that in that way their burden of responsibility is to some extent eased.

On the main issue of the Debate, let me say with what pleasure my hon. Friends and I have listened to the Prime Mi-

nister's assurance that His Majesty's Government are standing firm in the support of, and in the discharge of their obligations to, Poland at this critical time. We cannot go on from one September to another, always with a new crisis over some fresh series of demands. This must be stopped. Let me say, too, that my hon. Friends and I are equally grateful to hear the Prime Minister say that every possibility, within the framework of that determination, of a peaceful solution, is being sought. In that way Britain finds herself in harmony with world opinion in the search for a peaceful solution of world problems. Only the other day the king of the Belgians in his broadcast message, said, on behalf of himself and the rulers and statesmen who were associated with him:

"We solemnly formulate the view that the men on whom the course of events depends should accept submission of their claims to open negotiation in a spirit of brotherly co-operation."

The Pope said:

"Let men understand one another again and start negotiating. By negotiating with good will and respect for their reciprocal rights, they will realize that peaceful negotiations never exclude an honorable success."

Then there was President Roosevelt's appeal to Herr Hitler and President Moscicki of Poland to avoid war by direct negotiation, by arbitration, or by conciliation, it being understood, the President was careful to add, that:

"upon resort to either alternative, each nation will agree to accord complete respect to the independence and territorial integrity of the other."

King, Pope and President all appeal in the name of humanity to the Governments and peoples of the world that war should be avoided by the reasonable process of negotiation between the disputing parties, Germany and Poland. British Liberals certainly, and I believe British public opinion in almost complete unanimity, endorse those appeals. It is because I know the British Government are pursuing that policy in the name of the British people and because they are straining to bring about negotiation between Germany and Poland based on mu-

tual respect for one another's rights, that at this moment I agree with His Majesty's Government and believe them to be entitled to the support of Parliament and of all peace-loving people in this country.

President Moscicki has made Poland's willingness to negotiate abundantly plain in his letter to President Roosevelt. The last word now rests with Herr Hitler. I know of nothing that His Majesty's Government could have done at this stage and which they have left undone to make it possible for Herr Hitler to speak the word of negotiation and peace. I know of only one road which is barred by His Majesty's Government, and that is surrender to demands based on no higher sanction than the alleged national will of a single nation and backed by the threat of force. That is not a road to peace. At best it would lead us to another turning where we should have to choose again between war and submission. It would be the road of destruction for freedom, justice and international good faith, the very foundations upon which alone lasting peace can be established...

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, since the debate on August 24 the international situation has not substantially changed. The position remains one of great anxiety and danger but, until hope must be finally abandoned, there is still hope that reason may prevail. I gave the House on August 24 some account of the message which was sent to Herr Hitler by my right honorable friend the Prime Minister on August 23, and of the reply which had been received from him. On August 25 Herr Hitler invited His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin to call upon him and asked him to transmit a further message to His Majesty's Government. Herr Hitler also suggested that Sir Nevile Henderson should fly back to London, and personally report upon the communication which had been made to him. The communication was received here late on August 25 and Sir Nevile Henderson came to London on the afternoon of the following day. His Majesty's Government have now studied the German Chan-

cellor's communication with all the care and the attention which it demanded and His Majesty's Ambassador left yesterday afternoon for Berlin bearing with him a considered reply. He saw Herr Hitler late last night.

I should be glad if I could disclose to the House the fullest information as to the contents of the communications exchanged with Herr Hitler, but I hope noble Lords will understand that, in a situation of such extreme delicacy, and when issues so grave hang precariously in the balance, it is not in the public interest to publish these communications or to comment on them in detail. I am, however, able to indicate in quite general terms some of the main points with which they deal. Herr Hitler was concerned to impress upon His Majesty's Government his wish for an Anglo-German understanding of a complete and lasting character. On the other hand, he left His Majesty's Government in no doubt of his views as to the urgency of settling Polish-German questions. His Majesty's Government have frequently stated their desire to see the realization of such an Anglo-German understanding, and, as soon as circumstances permit, they would naturally welcome an opportunity of discussing with Germany the several issues a settlement of which would have to find place in any permanent agreement. But everything turns upon the manner in which the immediate differences between Germany and Poland can be handled and the nature of the proposals which might be made for any settlement. For we have made it plain that our obligations to Poland, cast into formal shape by the agreement signed on August 25, will be carried out. But, as noble Lords will remember, His Majesty's Government have said more than once publicly that German-Polish differences should be capable of solution by peaceful means.

Meanwhile, the first prerequisite, if there is to be any chance of useful discussions, is that the tension created by frontier clashes and by reports of incidents on both sides of the border should be diminished. His Majesty's Government accordingly hope that both Governments will use their best endeavor to prevent the occurrence of such incidents, the circulation of exaggerated reports, and of all other activities that



result in dangerous inflammation of opinion. His Majesty's Government would hope that if an equitable settlement of Polish-German differences could be reached by free negotiation, this might in turn lead to a wider agreement which would accrue to the lasting benefit of Europe and of the world at large.

I need not discuss in detail the background of events against which the communications between His Majesty's Government and Herr Hitler have been taking place. Further military preparations have been made in many European countries, there have been many incidents of the kind to which I have just referred, and there has been more interference with the existing Polish position in Danzig. On the other hand, there have been moving appeals from many quarters for a peaceful solution. The position, therefore, at this moment is that we are awaiting a further reply from Herr Hitler which every member of the House will hope may not close the door to peace.

In this moment of anxiety, His Majesty's Government have not neglected to take all steps which seem necessary to place this country in a state of complete readiness for all eventualities. These steps cover, of course, all the three Services and the wide range of civilian defense. The air defense of the country is now in a state of instant readiness. The whole of our Fighting Fleet is ready at a moment's notice to take up the dispositions which would be necessary in war. The appropriate instructions have already been issued to merchant shipping on the various routes, and the necessary preparations have been made for expediting the completion of the mobilization of the Regular Army and the embodiment of the Territorial Army, if this should prove necessary. Instructions to complete the organization of civil defense measure have been sent to the local authorities with whom the main responsibility lies. Noble Lords will have seen that a rehearsal of the arrangements for evacuating school children was carried through yesterday. In general, I think I can assure your Lordships that, thanks to public cooperation on all sides, all this action is proceeding smoothly and well, and that all preparations have been made to ensure that effect can be given to further precautionary mea-

asures as rapidly as possible as soon as these are found necessary.

I hope the House may feel, from what I have said, that during these last anxious days His Majesty's Government have done their best faithfully to pursue the policy which commands the practically unanimous support of the people of this country. We have sought to be absolutely firm in loyalty to our obligations, but, while determined to maintain any undertakings that we have given, we have thrown our whole influence upon the side of resolving these dangerous issues by negotiation rather than by force, which must immediately bring such incalculable consequences. Your Lordships will believe that the responsibility and the strain are not light, but His Majesty's Government have been constantly helped by the knowledge that in these matters they were speaking for a country that was absolutely united and that was itself facing the unknown future with complete steadiness and resolution. That attitude will, I have no doubt, be maintained, and I would only appeal to all those who speak or write in public to remember that on them, as on us, lies a great responsibility.



## Part II

### The War Began in Poland

SEPTEMBER 1-20, 1939

#### 45. OUTBREAK OF THE WAR (SEPTEMBER 1, 1939)\*

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 at 4:45 A.M. German armies crossed the Polish frontier and began military operations. A description of the political events preceding the outbreak of war was given in detail on September 1 by Prime Minister Chamberlain in the House of Commons and by Viscount Halifax in the House of Lords. On the same day the following proclamation was addressed to the German Army by Hitler:

*"The Polish State has refused the peaceful settlement of relations which I desired, and has appealed to arms. Germans in Poland are persecuted with bloody terror and driven from their houses. A series of violations of the frontier, intolerable to a great Power, prove that Poland is no longer willing to respect the frontier of the Reich.*

*In order to put an end to this lunacy, I have no other*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 126-138. House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 913-922.

*choice than to meet force with force from now on. The German Army will fight the battle for the honor and vital rights of reborn Germany with hard determination. I expect that every soldier, mindful of the great traditions of eternal German soldiery, will ever remain conscious that he is a representative of the National-Socialist Greater Germany. Long live our people and our Reich!"*

*At the outbreak of the war the Polish Army was only partly mobilized. General mobilization was decided upon in Warsaw late on August 28, 1939 and the first day of mobilization was set for August 30. However, on August 29, just before 2 P.M., the heads of the British and French military missions came to the Polish General Staff asking that they hold back the mobilization in consideration of talks which were then taking place in Berlin. At 4 P.M. on the same day the British and French Ambassadors were received by Polish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Szembek who informed them of the decision of the Polish Government to mobilize on August 30. The following is an excerpt from Mr. Szembek's report of this visit:*

*"The British Ambassador observed that the word "mobilization" would create the impression all over the world that we were embarking on war. At the present moment British-German conversations were still in progress, London was awaiting Berlin's answer. It would be highly desirable for the public announcement of mobilization to be delayed until this answer was received. The French Ambassador supported his British colleague's attitude, adding, however, that he had no objections whatever to make to the actual fact of mobilization."*

*In consequence of the observations made by the British and French Ambassadors to the Polish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Polish Government decided to postpone the public announcement of mobilization for several hours.*

*On August 30 it was decided to fix the following day, August 31, as the first day for mobilization.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : I do not propose to say many words tonight. The time has come when action rather than speech is required. Eighteen months ago in this House I prayed that the responsibility might not fall upon me to ask this country to accept the awful arbitrament of war. I fear that I may not be able to avoid that responsibility. But, at any rate, I cannot wish for conditions in which such a burden should fall upon me in which I should feel clearer than I do today as to where my duty lies. No man can say that the Government could have done more to try to keep open the way for an honorable and equitable settlement of the dispute between Germany and Poland. Nor have we neglected any means of making it crystal clear to the German Government that if they insisted on using force again in the manner in which they had used it in the past we were resolved to oppose them by force. Now that all the relevant documents are being made public we shall stand at the bar of history knowing that the responsibility for this terrible catastrophe lies on the shoulders of one man — the German Chancellor — who has not hesitated to plunge the world into misery in order to serve his own senseless ambitions.

I would like to thank the House for the forbearance which they recognized I could not give while these negotiations were still in progress. I have now had all the correspondence with the German Government put into the form of a White Paper. On account of mechanical difficulties I am afraid there are still but a few copies available, but I understand that they will be coming in in relays while the House is sitting. I do not think it is necessary for me to refer in detail now to these documents, which are already past history. They make it perfectly clear that our object has been to try and bring about discussions of the Polish-German dispute between the two countries themselves on terms of equality, the settlement to be one which safeguarded the independence of Poland and of which the due observance would be secured by international guarantees. There is just one passage from a recent communication, which was dated August 30, which I should like to quote, because it shows how easily the final clash might have been avoided

had there been the least desire on the part of the German Government to arrive at a peaceful settlement. In this document we said:

“His Majesty’s Government fully recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussions and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that during the negotiations no aggressive military movements should take place. His Majesty’s Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government if the German Government would give similar assurances.”

That telegram, which was repeated to Poland, brought an instantaneous reply from the Polish Government, dated August 31, in which they said:

“The Polish Government are also prepared on a reciprocal basis to give a formal guarantee in the event of negotiations taking place that Polish troops will not violate the frontiers of the German Reich provided a corresponding guarantee is given regarding the non-violation of the frontiers of Poland by troops of the German Reich.”

We never had any reply from the German Government to that suggestion, one which, if it had been followed, might have saved the catastrophe which took place this morning. In the German broadcast last night, which recited the 16 points of the proposals which they have put forward, there occurred this sentence:

“In these circumstances the Reich Government considers its proposals rejected.”

I must examine that statement. I must tell the House what are the circumstances. To begin with let me say that the text of these proposals has never been communicated by Germany to Poland at all. The history of the matter is this. On Tuesday, August 29, in replying to a note which we had sent to them, the German Government said, among other things, that they would immediately draw up proposals for a solution acceptable to themselves and

“will, if possible, place these at the disposal of the British Government before the arrival of the Polish negotiator.”

It will be seen by examination of the White Paper that the German Government had stated that they counted upon the arrival of a plenipotentiary from Poland in Berlin on the 30th, that is to say, on the following day. In the meantime, of course, we were awaiting these proposals. The next evening, when our Ambassador saw Herr von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Secretary, he urged upon the latter that when these proposals were ready — for we had heard no more about them — he should invite the Polish Ambassador to call and should hand him the proposals for transmission to his Government. Thereupon, reports our Ambassador, in the most violent terms Herr von Ribbentrop said he would never ask the Ambassador to visit him. He hinted that if the Polish Ambassador asked him for an interview it might be different.

The House will see that this was on Wednesday (August 30) night, which, according to the German statement of last night, is now claimed to be the final date after which no negotiation with Poland was acceptable. It is plain, therefore, that Germany claims to treat Poland as in the wrong because she had not by Wednesday night entered upon discussions with Germany about a set of proposals of which she had never heard.

Now what of ourselves? On that Wednesday night, at the interview to which I have just referred, Herr von Ribbentrop produced a lengthy document which he read out in German, aloud, at top speed. Naturally, after this reading our Ambassador asked for a copy of the document, but the reply was that it was now too late, as the Polish representative had not arrived in Berlin by midnight. And, so, Sir, we never got a copy of those proposals, and the first time we heard them — *we* heard them — was on the broadcast last night. Well, Sir, those are the circumstances in which the German Government said that they would consider that their proposals were rejected. Is it not clear that their conception of a negotiation was that on almost instantaneous demand a Polish plenipotentiary





The King and Prime Minister Chamberlain at Downing Street  
September 1, 1939.

should go to Berlin — where others had been before him — and should there receive a statement of demands to be accepted in their entirety or refused? I am not pronouncing any opinion upon the terms themselves, for I do not feel called upon to do so. The proper course, in our view — in the view of all of us — was that these proposals should have been put before the Poles, who should have been given time to consider them and to say whether, in their opinion, they did or did not infringe those vital interests of Poland which Germany had assured us on a previous occasion she intended to respect. Only last night the Polish Ambassador did see the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Ribbentrop. Once again he expressed to him what, indeed, the Polish Government had already said publicly, that they were willing to negotiate with Germany about their disputes on an equal basis. What was the reply of the German Government? The reply was that without another word the German troops crossed the Polish frontier this morning at dawn and are since reported to be bombing open towns. (An Hon. Member: "Gas?"). In these circumstances there is only one course open to us. His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin and the French Ambassador have been instructed to hand to the German Government the following document:

"Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland. Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks upon Polish towns are proceeding. In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and of France that by their action the German Government have created conditions, namely, an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland, which call for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and of France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance. I am accordingly to inform your Excellency that unless the German Government are prepared to give His Majesty's

Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland."

(An Hon. Member: "Time limit?") If a reply to this last warning is unfavorable, and I do not suggest that it is likely to be otherwise, His Majesty's Ambassador is instructed to ask for his passports. In that case we are ready. Yesterday, we took further steps towards the completion of our defensive preparations. This morning we ordered complete mobilization of the whole of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. We have also taken a number of other measures, both at home and abroad, which the House will not perhaps expect me to specify in detail. Briefly, they represent the final steps in accordance with pre-arranged plans. These last can be put into force rapidly, and are of such a nature that they can be deferred until war seems inevitable. Steps have also been taken under the powers conferred by the House last week to safeguard the position in regard to stocks of commodities of various kinds.

The thoughts of many of us must at this moment inevitably be turning back to 1914, and to a comparison of our position now with that which existed then. How do we stand this time? The answer is that all three Services are ready, and that the situation in all directions is far more favorable and reassuring than in 1914, while behind the fighting Services we have built up a vast organization of Civil Defense under our scheme of Air-Raid Precautions. As regards the immediate man-power requirements, the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force are in the fortunate position of having almost as many men as they can conveniently handle at this moment. There are, however, certain categories of service in which men are immediately required both for Military and Civil Defense. These will be announced in detail through the Press and the B.B.C. The main and most satisfactory point to observe is that there is today no need to make an appeal in a

general way for recruits such as was issued by Lord Kitchener 25 years ago. That appeal has been anticipated by many months and the men are already available.

So much for the immediate present. Now we must look to the future. It is essential in the face of the tremendous task which confronts us, more especially in view of our past experiences in this matter, to organize our manpower this time upon as methodical, equitable and economical a basis as possible. We, therefore, propose immediately to introduce legislation directed to that end. A Bill will be laid before you which for all practical purposes will amount to an expansion of the Military Training Act. Under its operation all fit men between the ages of 18 and 41 will be rendered liable to military service if and when called upon. It is not intended at the outset that any considerable number of men other than those already liable shall be called up, and steps will be taken to ensure that the manpower essentially required by industry shall not be taken away.

There is one other allusion which I should like to make before I end my speech, and that is to record my satisfaction, and the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government, that throughout these last days of crisis Signor Mussolini also has been doing his best to reach a solution.

It now only remains for us to set our teeth and to enter upon this struggle, which we ourselves earnestly endeavored to avoid, with determination to see it through to the end. We shall enter it with a clear conscience, with the support of the Dominions and the British Empire, and the moral approval of the greater part of the world. We have no quarrel with the German people, except that they allow themselves to be governed by a Nazi Government. As long as that Government exists and pursues the methods it has so persistently followed during the last two years, there will be no peace in Europe. We shall merely pass from one crisis to another, and see one country after another attacked by methods which have now become familiar to us in their sickening technique. We are resolved that these methods must come to an end. If out of the struggle we again re-establish in the world the rules of good faith and

the renunciation of force, why, then even the sacrifices that will be entailed upon us will find their fullest justification.

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD (Lab.) : I was not a Member of this House as some hon. and right hon. Members were 25 years ago, when we were confronted with a similar struggle. That was a grave time, but this is an even graver time. This is the turning point in human history, and we are now facing a situation which, in the history of mankind, has never been faced before in this country. The die is cast. It has been my privilege and my very heavy responsibility to act, on the last two occasions this House has met, as spokesman for my party and the movement which I represent. On both occasions I endeavored to put clearly and briefly the attitude which we, as a party, have taken. I epitomized the very solemn declarations made by British Labor in recent years. What I then said still holds. I withdraw nothing as to our criticisms of Government policy in the past, and our views as to the heavy responsibility which lies upon them as factors in creating the present situation; but today that is past history. We are facing a new situation, and on the two occasions on which I have addressed the House I put our conservative attitude. I now reaffirm, and say, for the third time in this House during the present crisis, that British Labor stands by its pledged word. We shall, at whatever cost, in the interests of the liberty of the world in the future, use all our resources to defend ourselves and others against aggression.

The right hon. Gentleman appears to have left another loophole. His communication gives the German Government an opportunity of withdrawal. There can now be no withdrawal, and in any event this nation is in honor bound. I would read Article I of the Anglo-Polish Treaty, an Article which bears only one meaning. It reads:

“Should one of the contracting Powers become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that contracting party, the other contracting party will, at once —”  
at once —

"give the contracting party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power."

The Prime Minister's words have been firm. He has uttered words from which he cannot, and I am sure he would not wish to, escape, but we are building our hopes upon sand, if we think that the German Government are going to give any kind of favorable response to the appeal which has been made. The act of aggression has already taken place. Herr Hitler has put himself grievously in the wrong. He has become the arch-enemy of mankind. He has been guilty not merely of the gravest, basest treachery to this Government and this people; he has been guilty of the basest treachery to all peoples to whom in the past he has given promises. The right hon. Gentleman quoted almost the exact words which I used in the House on Tuesday. I said that the issue of peace and war rested in the hands of one man. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has tonight put it equally emphatically.

I never thought that I should quote with approval from a document of which Herr Hitler was the author, but in the proclamation to the Army which he issued at 6 o'clock this morning he said:

"In order to put an end to this lunacy I have no other choice than to meet force with force from now on."

That is a sentiment echoed by practically every Member of this House. Then he goes on to say:

"I should like to assure the whole world that November, 1918, will never repeat itself."

With that I entirely agree. And that brings me to what we are to fight about.

The party to which I belong, which may have faults but which can never be accused of cowardice, will issue its statement tonight to this country and to the world on the view it takes. That view, I think, is the view which I have expressed on previous occasions. I quote just one sentence:

"The British Labor Movement therefore calls upon all its members to stand solidly behind it in resistance to aggression."

From that attitude we shall never depart. We shall enter the

struggle without passion against people. I was glad when the Prime Minister used words which we had used in our official declaration. We have no quarrel with the German people; but while we have no passion against people we shall enter this struggle with a grim determination to overthrow and destroy that system of government which has trampled on freedom and crucified men and women — and which has brought the world back to the jackboot of the old Prussianism. In the process of this struggle there will be far-reaching social and economic changes which at the moment no man can foresee, but out of the smoking ruins of the struggle will arise a new order of society. Once the gunfire ceases and the roll of the war drums dies away, after the greatest price mankind in all its history has ever paid to learn its lesson, dictatorship will have been destroyed for ever and organized labor here, and elsewhere in other lands besides ourselves, will play its part in building a new world from which war will be banished and in which a new order will be established.

There is a view among those who are now our enemies that might is right. I believe that right is might. I believe that at long last right must win, whether it be internationally or whether it be nationally. There is in the human spirit something which may be tortured and which may be temporarily suppressed but which can never be destroyed, and that is its determination to keep alive and keep fully aflame the lamp of liberty. My last words are these: I look forward, as we all do, with a very sad heart and with a sorrow that none of us can express, regarding the sufferings which must fall upon hundreds of millions of people, but, however great the suffering, however poignant the agony and whatever the sacrifice may be, I know in my heart that freedom and mankind's hope for the future cannot be quenched. I know that liberty will prevail.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): The Prime Minister has spoken this afternoon almost the gravest words that a statesman can utter. He has spoken not only for himself and for his party, and not only for the Government of which he is the

head, but for the nation as a whole; and my hon. Friends and I support him in the stand which he is now taking. The issue we are debating this afternoon is that of peace or war, the gravest that can come before Parliament; but we are not starting a war. In the height of our controversies last year, when many of us were strongly criticizing the Prime Minister's policy and methods, I not only made it clear that I did not doubt, but I paid a positive tribute to, the Prime Minister's unsparing devotion to the cause of peace. During recent weeks the Government have left nothing undone to contribute towards a freely negotiated and peaceful settlement of Germany's claims on Poland. It was not Britain, it was not France, it was not Poland that refused to come to the table to negotiate, it was Herr Hitler.

It is now abundantly clear that the war started not this morning in Poland, but three years ago with the occupation of the Rhineland, the war to establish the domination of Nazi Germany in Europe and in the world, the war in which successive, and temporarily successful, moves have been played in Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and, last of all, in Russia. Every move has strengthened the forces of aggression and weakened those of law, reason, negotiation and peace. Now, if Poland were to be obliterated, not for the first time, from the map of Europe, Nazi domination would be established, directly or indirectly, over every country in Europe East of the Rhine, its resources would be strengthened by theirs, and France and Britain would be left alone either to receive its onslaught or to submit to the extinction of liberty in Europe. I am not going to take up the time of the House discussing what the Prime Minister himself refrained from discussing, the terms of the German broadcast last night. Suffice it to say if a powerful nation is to be allowed to order a weaker nation to send to its capital city a plenipotentiary, empowered to discuss and conclude a settlement of a dispute on terms of which its own government is in ignorance, that is government by force and ultimatum; and when such things are happening — and, as the Prime Minister said this afternoon, so long as the Nazi Government exists in Germany — there can be no freedom,



order or peace in Europe.

Now, vigorous action must be taken by us, in conjunction with our Allies, to sustain the common cause of freedom. It is essential, therefore, that ample powers should be given to the Government, and therefore my hon. Friends and I will support the Bills which have been introduced into the House today. It is also essential that an instrument of government should be created, free enough from the routine work of administration to plan ahead and strong enough to act vigorously and swiftly. It is necessary that we should make the best use of those great resources of manpower and material which we have at our disposal. While it was in one respect gratifying that the Prime Minister was able to tell us that there were so many men volunteering that the fighting Services had as many as they could at the present time handle, it is very important that those fighting Services should be themselves in a position to handle increasing numbers as quickly as possible. Hence, the necessity for a War Cabinet.

Let us, too, in this solemn moment set the goal of our endeavor clearly before us: not the aggrandizement of our country and Empire, not merely the defeat of Nazi tyranny. Tyranny has been defeated before, dictatorship has been defeated before; and it has sprung up again. Let us keep before us the necessity for constructive effort, for the creation in Europe of that new order which, before the emergence of National Socialism in Germany, we were beginning slowly, with many setbacks, but on the whole not unsuccessfully to build, an order based not on the sanctions of power politics but on the moral law, in which freedom, justice and equality of economic opportunity will be guaranteed to nations great and small alike.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX): My Lords, the conditions under which your Lordships meet are very grave. I do not know whether your Lordships have yet had opportunity — I rather fear you may not — to study the documents that have been laid this afternoon and that will be published in the Press tomorrow, but when you do

you will, I think, see quite clearly how the negotiations leading up to the present situation have developed. As was stated the other day in the reply of the President of Poland to the President of the United States, the Polish Government have been prepared to enter into direct negotiations with the German Government and His Majesty's Government were authorized by the Polish Government to state in their communication to the German Government on August 28 that the Polish Government were willing to enter into such discussions on the basis that had been proposed by His Majesty's Government. Again, last night, in Berlin the Polish Ambassador sought an interview with the German Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, and repeated the assurance of the Polish Government's readiness to negotiate the questions in dispute with the German Government on a free and equal basis. I understand that immediately after that interview he endeavored to communicate with his Government but was unable to do so, because communications between Berlin and Warsaw had been cut, and at dawn this morning — so His Majesty's Ambassador at Warsaw has reported — German troops advanced over the frontier. It is perhaps worth mentioning that we have received an official and most categorical denial from the Polish Government that the Polish forces committed any act of aggression last night as reported by the German News Agency.

The German broadcast of the sixteen points last night contained the sentence "In these circumstances the Reich Government considers its proposals rejected," and it is therefore worth while examining what those circumstances were. The proposals of the German Government had in fact never been communicated by Germany to Poland at all. His Majesty's Ambassador saw Herr von Ribbentrop on Wednesday evening — the night before last — and urged that when the German proposals were ready Herr von Ribbentrop should invite the Polish Ambassador to call and should hand him the proposals for transmission to his Government. Thereupon, as the Ambassador reported, in his own words, "in the most violent terms Herr von Ribbentrop said that he would never ask the Polish Ambassador to visit him," but he hinted that if the Polish Am-

bassador asked him for an interview it might be different. This was on Wednesday night, which according to the German statement of last night is now claimed to be the final date after which no negotiations with Poland were acceptable. The inference would seem plain, and the inference would seem to be that Germany claims to treat Poland as in the wrong because, although the Polish Ambassador was in touch with the German Foreign Minister last night, Thursday, Poland had not by Wednesday night entered upon a discussion with Germany of a set of proposals of which the Polish Government had never heard.

Not only that, but the text of these proposals had never been communicated to His Majesty's Government before we heard them on the German wireless last night. When our Ambassador on Wednesday night, August 30, or in the early hours of Thursday morning, saw Herr von Ribbentrop the latter, as our Ambassador telegraphs, produced a lengthy document which he read out in German aloud, at top speed, and our Ambassador naturally supposed that after this reading he would be furnished with a copy of the document, but when he asked Herr von Ribbentrop for the text of these proposals the reply he received was that it was now too late, as the Polish representative had not arrived in Berlin by midnight. Consequently, until the German broadcast last night our Ambassador was only able to furnish us with an outline from recollection of Herr von Ribbentrop's reading.

I think from those facts — and I have tried to state them as shortly and as plainly as I can — it is clear that the true facts are not as stated in the German wireless, but that the text of the German proposals was not, before it was broadcast, communicated either to Poland or to Great Britain, and noble Lords and those outside can draw their own deductions. The rulers of Germany appear to have conceived of a negotiation between themselves and Poland as nothing more than the summoning of a Polish plenipotentiary to Berlin at twenty-four hours' notice, to discuss terms not previously communicated to them, and I am bound to say that such a position, with the examples of the Austrian Chancellor and the President of

Czechoslovakia before them, was not one which I think the Polish Government could readily be expected to accept. And thus, in those circumstances, when the German Chancellor issued this morning a statement that "the Polish State has refused the peaceful settlement of relations which I desire," my Lords, of those issues and of those doings the world will judge. The language used by the German representatives, the documents, and above all I think the action of the German Government, speak for themselves.

As regards the actual terms concerning Danzig and the Corridor, now published, it would naturally have been primarily for the Polish Government to express their opinion upon their full significance. His Majesty's Government can only say this, that in their view, had the German Government been sincerely anxious to negotiate a settlement they would surely have submitted these terms to the Polish Government, giving them time to consider whether or not they could fairly be held to infringe Poland's vital interests, which the German Government, in their communication to the British Government of August 29, had declared their intention of respecting.

I saw the Polish Ambassador at 10:30 this morning. He told me that according to his information German troops had crossed the Polish frontier at four points, and that several Polish towns had already been bombed. I immediately asked the Counsellor of the German Embassy, the *Chargé d'Affaires*, to see me. I told him that His Majesty's Government had received these reports, and I inquired of him whether he had himself received any information or had any communication from his own Government for His Majesty's Government. The Counsellor replied that he had neither received information nor instructions to make any communication, and I told him that we were, I feared, faced with a situation of which I could not exaggerate the gravity.

I added to him that the Cabinet was meeting this morning, and that any further communication we had to make in the light of these events would be addressed to his Government. His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin has now been instructed

to make the following communication to the German Government:

"On the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs I have the honor to make the following communication. Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland. Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and the French Government, indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier, and that attacks upon Polish towns are proceeding.

"In these circumstances, it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and France that by their action the German Government have created conditions (namely, an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which call for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

"I am accordingly to inform your Excellency that unless the German Government are prepared immediately to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will, without hesitation, fulfill their obligations to Poland."

It is thus that we reach the end of all the efforts and the hopes of these last weeks, and I do not suppose that any man has ever labored more devotedly for peace than my right honorable friend the Prime Minister; and no stronger proof, in my judgment, could be afforded of the fact that the present situation has been forced upon this country, than that it should be to him of all men that it falls to lead our country, if so it be, into war. Any one who reads these documents and who knows the instinctive desire for understanding common, I believe, both to the German and the British peoples, can mea-

sure the tragedy that is involved by the totally unjustifiable action taken this morning by the German leaders, and first and foremost by the German Chancellor, on whom in history surely an overwhelming responsibility will lie.

So far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, I cannot think of anything that we have left undone or that, looking back, one wished to have done differently. It has been a source of great satisfaction to us to know that Signor Mussolini also was using all his influence in an endeavor, up to the last moment, to save the peace. Our conscience, I think we can say, is clear. As will be seen from the documents, when your Lordships have time to study them, we have made it absolutely plain to the German Government what the consequences of such action as they have taken must be; and there is indeed only one thing that I can think of that we might have done to save the peace, but which I think would have been an action quite impossible for this country, with any regard to its principles or to its honor, to take, and that one thing would have been to have pressed the Polish Government to submit to methods of intimidation, on which basis alone were the German Government apparently willing to discuss their proposals. In other words, that once again Europe should agree to be held to ransom by the naked menace of force.

If one thing has been made clear it is, I am afraid, that the German Government were not prepared to lay force aside. This problem of Danzig and the Corridor has been present for twenty years. When it suited Germany in 1934 to be on good terms with Poland, the Danzig question faded out, and only during the last five months has it been deliberately aggravated and inflamed. And although it only took the German Government a few weeks to rouse feeling to fever pitch, it was, to say the least, unreasonable to make the presence of a Polish plenipotentiary within twenty-four hours a condition of any negotiation, and to expect those negotiations to be conducted on the basis of proposals which the Polish Government had not at that time had any opportunity of seeing. It is surely partly in the light of that action that the proposals themselves fall to be judged. Certainly we must all have learnt that so long as en-

gagements are to be freely broken without notice, and so long as force is to be the arbiter of international disputes, we were bound to look forward to a new crisis every six months, and to see one country after another made the object of this menace of force. And that, I think, is the answer to those who, here or elsewhere, might ask why this country should interest itself in a dispute which did not apparently or immediately concern it. My right honorable friend the Prime Minister answered this in other words when he said in another place a few days ago that, if war came, we should not be fighting merely on the issue raised by the position of some far off city in a foreign land, but for principles on which all international life finally depends, and apart from which, I think, no international life is tolerable.

LORD SNELL (Lab.) : My Lords, your Lordships' House will have heard with strained attention the statement of such tragic significance that the noble Viscount has just made to you. The circumstances under which we are meeting would appear to require from every member of our Lordships' House and every responsible person in the community the very greatest restraint in what they say. We, representing the Labor Party, have, as you know, from time to time very seriously criticized the foreign policy adopted by His Majesty's Government, and we do not today withdraw any word of that criticism. It is not necessary to repeat it, but I think I may be allowed, without doing outrage to the position that we have taken, to express at the beginning a word of sympathy for the members of His Majesty's Government who have had to face in these last days circumstances of such tremendous importance. It is very difficult to see what can now be said. The dreadful die appears to have been cast. The aggressor has chosen to try to settle by force a question that can only be settled right if it is settled by reason and by conference. Because the Polish nation were unwilling at an hour's notice to rush to Berlin and to grovel and capitulate, Polish cities are apparently being bombed and innocent people are being injured and perhaps killed. It is characteristic of the German Government that in entering up-

on this contest its Leader boasts much as a pugilist boasts before he has fought his battle. It may be that the second German war will be no more successful than the first. It might have been well if Herr Hitler had remembered the ancient advice:

“Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.”

We shall not imitate that temper either in this place or elsewhere. With no vain boasting, with no illusions, but also with no misgiving, our country, if need be, will try to uphold the right of free men to remain free. Less than that it does not seem to us we could do.

We have in this crisis, I hope it will be agreed, given to His Majesty's Government such support as the information at our disposal led us to believe was right. It gives us therefore the right on this occasion to ask that as far as is possible salient information shall be made available to us. So far as I have understood the noble Viscount, it would appear that an ultimatum has been sent. It is a dreadful thing for a man like myself, who all his life has worked for peace, to have to appear to counsel belligerent action, but my Party believe that we cannot allow the Polish people to bear the whole brunt of this assault. If hostilities begin, one thing is clear, they will have, here as elsewhere, tremendous economic and social reactions. We shall have our own opinion when the time comes as to how that situation should be dealt with, but our common task now appears to be to try to see that organized, deliberately planned, and systematic aggression does not pay. It may be necessary for us to call upon the established qualities of our race — constancy, resolution, endurance — and I think we can face this issue in the quiet confidence that wrong cannot in the long run triumph on the earth.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE (L.) : My Lords, in following for a very few moments the noble Lord who has just spoken, and following him with complete agreement in everything he has said, I should like also to express my sense of the ordeal through which His Majesty's Ministers have been passing



during these last few days and weeks in connection with this intensely difficult international crisis. The noble Viscount opposite has once more, as he has before, spoken the mind of the whole country. He made it abundantly clear that all through it has never been the intention of the German Government to settle this question by free discussion and frank negotiation. To draw up, as they did, an elaborate series of propositions which it is not worth anybody's while now to examine, and to throw them on the table with the intimation to Poland that the Polish representative must come to Berlin, nominally to discuss them but obviously only to accept them — that cannot in any sense be said to partake of the nature of negotiation or discussion.

If negotiation had been desired, it would have been easy, as the noble Viscount has pointed out, to communicate these propositions to the Polish Government in good time. They might, and ought, also to have been handed to the French Ambassador and to our Ambassador with full time to examine them. That these last did not receive them is no doubt part of the thesis which the German Government have held all through, that the doings of any country are only the concern of their immediate neighbors — in this case of themselves — although it is not a principle on which in other cases they have acted. The German Government have taken as their device the terrible Roman saying, "Let them hate us so long as they fear us." That being their motto, they are obviously unwilling to enter into serious discussion with any Power that they think they can induce to fear them. Now, as the noble Viscount has told us, His Majesty's Government have presented to the German Government a document which I think it would not be quite accurate to describe as an ultimatum, but which can be described as a frank statement of our moral and political duty and of our determination to follow the path that circumstances require. All that we can say is that we stand by the right, and we believe that the right will prevail.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, words cannot describe, it is almost impossible for imagination to realize, the gravity of this fateful hour. Let me say at the outset

that our thoughts must turn to the King, called at the very beginning of his reign, like his father, a reign begun with such high promise, to be the head of the nation at what may be a time of bitter trial. I am sure that from this House and from the whole country there will arise the resolute loyalty by which he will be fortified and sustained. Our sympathies go out in the fullest measure to the Prime Minister and to the noble Viscount, who has spoken in terms so grave and solemn this afternoon, in that all their patience and long-continued endeavors to find a peaceful solution of these troubles have been frustrated. They have done their best, and their country is grateful to them for what they have done.

Perhaps you may expect that some words should be spoken by me from this place about the moral or even spiritual issues which seem to be involved in the struggle which, alas seems to be impending. Our quarrel is not with all the specific aims and claims of Germany. Some of these we have constantly stated we regard as capable of reasonable discussion. Our quarrel is with the methods by which the ruler of Germany has sought to attain them. Such methods and the principles which lie behind them are obviously inconsistent with the very first principles upon which any civilized order among nations can be built. If these methods were to have free course, if any State were permitted to ride rough-shod over obligations of treaty and assurance and to use force either to attack or threaten to attack the independence of the territory of another State merely in the interests of its own expansion or power, there would surely be an end to any security of justice or liberty among nations. That seems to me, as to all your Lordships, the supreme moral issue which is involved. It is one from which we in this country and our Allies, bound as we are by very special and solemn undertakings, cannot shrink. I think it is of high importance, that at the very outset of what may be a long and painful struggle the primacy of this moral issue should be made plain, for it will enable us to enter upon that struggle with a good conscience.

I think I speak for your Lordships when I say that we have no thoughts of enmity towards the German people. We

believe that many, perhaps most of them, are as opposed to war as we are, but they cannot speak their minds. They are not allowed to know the other side; they have been bewildered and misled by a long, elaborate and most unscrupulous propaganda. Our feelings towards them, surely, are rather of sympathy than of enmity. We are not contending for any particular form of government, deeply attached as we are to our own form of democracy. We are not contending for any direct interests of our own save those which we share with other nations, though indeed we must see that conceivably, if Herr Hitler's policy were to prevail, our own country and the commonwealth of nations might come within the ambit of his unbridled ambition. Surely, my Lords, what we are contending for is a clear and simple moral issue, and accepting a challenge which, if it is not met, would be fatal to civilization itself. . .

46. SECOND DAY OF WAR. ITALIAN PROPOSALS. INCORPORATION OF DANZIG INTO THE REICH.  
(SEPTEMBER 2, 1939)\*

ON JULY 31, 1939 *Italy proposed a conference of Great Britain, France, Poland, Italy and Germany for September 5, 1939 "with the object of examining the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles which are the cause of present disturbance in the life of Europe."* France accepted the proposition and the following official statement was issued in Paris by the Havas Agency during the night of September 1 to 2:

*"The French Government has been made cognizant, yesterday, as were several Governments, of an Italian move with the object of insuring the settlement of the European difficulties. After carefully considering the question the French Government has given a 'positive' reply."*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 280-286,  
House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 952-954.

*Great Britain refused to participate in the conference proposed by Italy, as was stated by Prime Minister Chamberlain in the House of Commons on September 2. The reasons for the refusal were: the invasion of Poland, the bombardment of Polish towns, and the unilateral settlement of the Danzig question.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): Sir Nevile Henderson was received by Herr von Ribbentrop at half-past nine last night, and he delivered the warning message which was read to the House yesterday. Herr von Ribbentrop replied that he must submit the communication to the German Chancellor. Our Ambassador declared his readiness to receive the Chancellor's reply. Up to the present no reply has been received.

It may be that the delay is caused by consideration of a proposal which, meanwhile, had been put forward by the Italian Government, that hostilities should cease and that there should then immediately be a conference between the Five Powers, Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany and Italy. While appreciating the efforts of the Italian Government, His Majesty's Government, for their part, would find it impossible to take part in a conference while Poland is being subjected to invasion, her towns are under bombardment and Danzig is being made the subject of unilateral settlement by force. His Majesty's Government will, as stated yesterday, be bound to take action unless the German forces are withdrawn from Polish territory. They are in communication with the French Government as to the limit of time within which it would be necessary for the British and French Governments to know whether the German Government were prepared to effect such a withdrawal. If the German Government should agree to withdraw their forces then His Majesty's Government would be willing to regard the position as being the same as it was before the German forces crossed the Polish frontier. **That is to say, the way would be open to discussion between the German and Polish Governments on the matters at issue between them, on the understanding that the settlement arrived at was**

one that safeguarded the vital interests of Poland and was secured by an international guarantee. If the German and Polish Governments wished that other Powers should be associated with them in the discussion, His Majesty's Government for their part would be willing to agree.

There is one other matter to which allusion should be made in order that the present situation may be perfectly clear. Yesterday Herr Forster who, on August 23, had, in contravention of the Danzig constitution, become the head of the State, decreed the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich and the dissolution of the constitution. Herr Hitler was asked to give effect to this decree by German law. At a meeting of the Reichstag yesterday morning a law was passed for the reunion of Danzig with the Reich. The international status of Danzig as a Free City is established by a treaty of which His Majesty's Government are a signatory, and the Free City was placed under the protection of the League of Nations. The rights given to Poland in Danzig by treaty are defined and confirmed by agreement concluded between Danzig and Poland. The action taken by the Danzig authorities and the Reichstag yesterday is the final step in the unilateral repudiation of these international instruments, which could only be modified by negotiation. His Majesty's Government do not, therefore, recognize either the validity of the grounds on which the action of the Danzig authorities was based, the validity of this action itself, or the effect given to it by the German Government.

MR. GREENWOOD (Lab.) : This is indeed a grave moment. I believe the whole House is perturbed by the right hon. Gentleman's statement. There is a growing feeling, I believe, in all quarters of the House that this incessant strain must end sooner or later — and, in a sense, the sooner the better. But if we are to march, I hope we shall march in complete unity, and march with France.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.) : You people do not intend to march — not one of you.

MR. GREENWOOD : I am speaking under very difficult cir-

cumstances with no opportunity to think about what I should say; and I speak what is in my heart at this moment. I am gravely disturbed. An act of aggression took place 38 hours ago. The moment that act of aggression took place one of the most important treaties of modern times automatically came into operation. There may be reasons why instant action was not taken. I am not prepared to say — and I have tried to play a straight game — I am not prepared to say what I would have done had I been one of those sitting on those Benches. That delay might have been justifiable, but there are many of us on all sides of this House who view with the gravest concern the fact that hours went by and news came in of bombing operations, and news today of an intensification of it, and I wonder how long we are prepared to vacillate at a time when Britain and all that Britain stands for, and human civilization, are in peril. We must march with the French. I hope these words of mine may go further. I do not believe that the French dare at this juncture go, or would dream at this juncture of going back on the sacred oaths that they may have taken. It is not for me to rouse any kind of suspicion — and I would never dream of doing so at this time, but if, as the right hon. Gentleman has told us, deeply though I regret it, we must wait upon our Allies, I should have preferred the Prime Minister to have been able to say tonight definitely, "It is either peace or war."

Tomorrow we meet at 12. I hope the Prime Minister then — well, he must be in a position to make some further statement. (Hon. Members: "Definite") And I must put this point to him. Every minute's delay now means the loss of life, imperilling our national interests —

MR. BOOTHBY: Honor.

MR. GREENWOOD: Let me finish my sentence. I was about to say imperilling the very foundations of our national honor, and I hope, therefore, that tomorrow morning, however hard it may be to the right hon. Gentleman — and no one would care to be in his shoes tonight — we shall know the mind of the British Government, and that there shall be no more devices for dragging out what has been dragged out too

long. The moment we look like weakening, at that moment dictatorship knows we are beaten. We are not beaten. We shall not be beaten. We cannot be beaten, but delay is dangerous, and I hope the Prime Minister — it is very difficult to press him too hard at this stage — will be able to tell us when the House meets at noon tomorrow what the final decision is, and whether then our promises are in the process of fulfilment, for in my mind there can be no escape now from the dilemma into which we have been placed. I cannot see Herr Hitler, in honesty, making any deal which he will not be prepared to betray. Therefore, thinking very hurriedly in these few moments, I believe that the die is cast, and we want to know in time.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): This meeting will not have been held in vain if it demonstrates to the world that the British Parliament will not tolerate delay in the fulfilment of our honorable obligations to Poland. The Prime Minister in his statement said that we have received no reply from the German Government to our Note, and that the delay in sending us a reply might have been caused by consideration of the Italian proposal for a conference. Consideration of that proposal has, at any rate, caused no delay in the advance of the German Army, and I am sure that Parliament feels that a reply must be demanded, unless the advance of those armies is promptly stopped. It is, of course, vital that we should march in step with our French allies. Let not the confidence which we feel in our French allies waver if, indeed, they wish to await the decision of their Chamber. That requirement may impose some measure of delay at this time, but the Prime Minister has undertaken to make a statement at noon tomorrow. I hope that before then some information of this sitting of Parliament and of the feeling of Parliament on this issue may be conveyed to the French Government. I have no doubt that their response will be generous and cordial and that their feelings will be the same as ours, but it is well that they should know what ours are. I hope that when we meet at noon tomorrow the Prime Minister will be able to give us a statement.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think the House recognizes that the Government is in a somewhat difficult position. I suppose it always must be a difficulty for allies who have to communicate with one another by telephone to synchronize their thoughts and actions as quickly as those who are in the same room; but I should be horrified if the House thought for one moment that the statement that I have made to them betrayed the slightest weakening either of this Government or of the French Government in the attitude which we have already taken up. I am bound to say that I myself share the distrust which the right hon. Gentleman expressed of manoeuvres of this kind. I should have been very glad had it been possible for me to say to the House now that the French Government and ourselves were agreed to make the shortest possible limit to the time when action should be taken by both of us.

It is very possible that the communications which we have had with the French Government will receive a reply from them in the course of the next few hours. I understand that the French cabinet is in session at this moment, and I feel certain that I can make a statement to the House of a definite character tomorrow when the House meets again. I am the last man to neglect any opportunity which I consider affords a serious chance of avoiding the great catastrophe of war even at the last moment, but I confess that in the present case I should have to be convinced of the good faith of the other side in any action which they took before I could regard the proposition which has been made as one to which we could expect a reasonable chance of a successful issue. I anticipate that there is only one answer I shall be able to give to the House tomorrow. I hope that the issue will be brought to a close at the earliest possible moment so that we may know where we are, and I trust that the House, realizing the position which I have tried to put before it, will believe me that I speak in complete good faith and will not prolong the discussion which, perhaps, might make our position more embarrassing than it is.

COLONEL SANDEMAN ALLEN (C.): Could not the Sitting of the House be suspended, not adjourned? It might mean a little



discomfort to the Hon. Members but that is not a great consideration. The House would then be available at any time to hear a statement from the Prime Minister.

MR. MAXTON (I.L.P.) : I hope that the suggestion made by the hon. and gallant Member will not be considered by the Prime Minister. I hope that this House will go and sleep on it, and that tomorrow at 12 o'clock the Prime Minister will be able to come and make a definite statement to this House that there is the possibility of saving the peace of Europe. Do not let us shout across the Floor of the House terms about honor and bravery, and all the rest of it. Millions of ordinary working folk will get neither honor nor anything else out of a general European war, and if the bombs can be stopped tomorrow in Poland — the Prime Minister's condition, as I understand it — and if they can be prevented from raining over the other cities of Europe, then it will be one of the greatest achievements that the world has ever seen. The horror of a world-wide war — (An Hon. Member: "Postponed for a few months.") I am not entering into prophecies, but I believe that war postponed is something gained. The mass of humanity are common-sense people. Given time, common sense, throughout the various countries, even in Germany, will begin to function and bring to bear powers that will put a stop to these wild adventures that have terrified Europe. I appeal to the Prime Minister not to allow himself to be rushed. He has to take the principal decision and the principal responsibility. Let him think once, twice, or thrice before he plunges Europe into war.

SIR JOHN WARDLAW-MILNE (C.) : I think everybody in the House will agree entirely with the remark of the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) that everything is to be gained by war avoided. The point tonight, however, is, unfortunately, that the war has not stopped. It is going on. There is no Member of the House, on whatever side he may sit, who will not pay a tribute in his heart, and indeed most publicly, to the work which the Prime Minister has done for peace. Everybody knows that the Prime Minister is devoted to peace. Everybody agrees also that it is necessary that we should march step by step with France; but our pledge to Poland is Britain's

pledge, not France's. We must remember that now it is, as the right hon. Gentleman said, 38 hours since this war began. It is now something like 24 hours — I do not know the exact time — since the Prime Minister's message was delivered in Germany. If there were any intention on the part of Germany to comply with that request, to fall in with any scheme for peace, surely she could have stopped the devastation by now. I say this not because I disagree with the Prime Minister — and I am sure that everybody will agree with me in this — and not because I do not appreciate the burden that is upon him, the terrible responsibility which he has to bear; but I do pray that he will remember, as indeed, I know he will remember, that the whole country is nervous about this continual delay in carrying out our pledges.

## HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX): My Lords, I must first of all apologize to your Lordships for having been unable to keep my provisional undertaking to make the statement at six o'clock. His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin was received by Herr von Ribbentrop at 9:30 last night when he delivered the warning message which was read to the House yesterday. Herr von Ribbentrop replied that he must submit the communication to the German Chancellor. The Ambassador declared his readiness to receive the Chancellor's reply, but up to the present no reply has been received. It is possible that delay has been due to a proposal which has meanwhile been put forward by the Italian Government that hostilities should cease and that there should then immediately be a conference between the five Powers — Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany and Italy.

While appreciating the efforts of the Italian Government, His Majesty's Government for their part would not find it possible to take part in a conference whilst Poland is being subjected to invasion, her towns are under bombardment and Danzig has been made the subject of a unilateral settlement by force. His Majesty's Government will, as stated yesterday, be bound to take action unless the German forces are with-

drawn from Polish territory. They are in communication with the French Government as to the limit of time within which it would be necessary for His Majesty's Government and the French Government to know whether the German Government were prepared to effect such withdrawal. If the German Government should agree to withdraw their forces, then His Majesty's Government would be willing to regard the position as being the same as it was before the German forces crossed the Polish frontier, that is to say, the way would be open to discussion between the German and Polish Governments of the matters at issue between them, on the understanding that the settlement arrived at was one that safeguarded the vital interests of Poland and was secured by an international guarantee. If the German and Polish Governments wished that other Powers should be associated with them in the discussion, His Majesty's Government for their part would be willing to agree.

There is one other matter to which allusion should be made in order to make the present situation perfectly clear. Yesterday, Herr Forster, who on August 23 had, in contravention of the Danzig Constitution, become the head of the State, decreed the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich and the dissolution of the Constitution. Herr Hitler was asked to give effect to this decree by German law. At the meeting of the Reichstag yesterday morning a law was passed for the reunion of Danzig with the Reich. The international status of Danzig as a Free City is established by a treaty of which His Majesty's Government is a signatory and the Free City was placed under the protection of the League of Nations. The rights given to Poland in Danzig by treaty are defined and confirmed by agreements concluded between Danzig and Poland. The action taken by the Danzig authorities and the Reichstag yesterday is the final step in the unilateral repudiation of these international instruments, which could only be modified by negotiation. His Majesty's Government do not therefore recognize either the validity of the grounds on which the action of the Danzig authorities was based, the validity of this action itself, or of the effect given to it by the German Government.

## 47. GREAT BRITAIN DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY (SEPTEMBER 3, 1939) \*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): When I spoke last night to the House I could not but be aware that in some parts of the House there were doubts and some bewilderment as to whether there had been any weakening, hesitation or vacillation on the part of His Majesty's Government. In the circumstances, I make no reproach, for if I had been in the same position as hon. Members not sitting on this Bench and not in possession of all the information which we have, I should very likely have felt the same. The statement which I have to make this morning will show that there were no grounds for doubt. We were in consultation all day yesterday with the French Government and we felt that the intensified action which the Germans were taking against Poland allowed no delay in making our own position clear. Accordingly, we decided to send to our Ambassador in Berlin instructions which he was to hand at nine o'clock this morning to the German Foreign Secretary and which read as follows:

"Sir,

In the communication which I had the honor to make to you on September 1, I informed you, on the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that unless the German Government were prepared to give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would, without hesitation, fulfill their obligations to Poland.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 291-298.  
House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 955-958.

Although this communication was made more than 24 hours ago, no reply has been received, but German attacks upon Poland have been continued and intensified. I have, accordingly, the honor to inform you that unless not later than 11 a.m., British Summer Time, today, September 3, satisfactory assurances to the above effect have been given by the German Government and



Demonstration in Warsaw before the British Embassy. "Long live England." September 3, 1939.

have reached His Majesty's Government in London, a state of war will exist between the two countries as from that hour."

That was the final Note. No such undertaking was received by the time stipulated, and, consequently, this country is at war with Germany. I am in a position to inform the House

that, according to arrangements made between the British and French Governments, the French Ambassador in Berlin is at this moment making a similar démarche, accompanied also by a definite time limit. The House has already been made aware of our plans. As I said the other day, we are ready.

This is a sad day for all of us, and to none is it sadder than to me. Everything that I have worked for, everything that I have hoped for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed into ruins. There is only one thing left for me to do; that is, to devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much. I cannot tell what part I may be allowed to play myself; I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established.

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD (Lab.) : The atmosphere of this House has changed overnight. Resentment, apprehension, anger, reigned over our proceedings last night, aroused by a fear that delays might end in national dishonor and the sacrifice of the Polish people to German tyranny. Those feelings, I have reason to believe, were shared by large numbers of people outside, and, from messages which have come to me this morning, I believe that what I said last night met with the approval of our people. This morning we meet in an entirely different atmosphere — one of relief, one of composure, and one of resolution. The intolerable agony of suspense from which all of us have suffered is over; we now know the worst. The hated word “war” has been spoken by Britain, in fulfilment of her pledged word and unbreakable intention to defend Poland and so to defend the liberties of Europe. We have heard more than the word spoken. We have heard the war begin, within the precincts of this House.

I feel that I must, in the name of my hon. Friends — I think I may say in the name of the whole House and of the whole of our people — pay tribute to the great restraint shown by Poland in recent weeks. The last 54 hours have proved that their restraint was not due to cowardice, but to a firm convic-

tion in the righteousness of their cause. For 54 hours Poland has stood alone, at the portals of civilization, defending us and all free nations, and all that we stand for, and all that we hold dear. She has stood with unexampled bravery, with epic heroism, before her hesitant friends have come to her aid. Poland we greet as a comrade whom we shall not desert. To her we say, "Our hearts are with you, and, with our hearts, all our power, until the angel of peace returns to our midst."

Lastly, in this titanic struggle, unparalleled, I believe, in the history of the world, Nazism must be finally overthrown. The Prime Minister has given us his word that it shall be, and as long as that relentless purpose is pursued with vigor, with foresight, and with determination by the Government, so long will there be a united nation. But should there be confused councils, inefficiency and wavering, then other men must be called to take their places. We share no responsibilities in the tremendous tasks which confront the Government, but we have responsibilities of our own, which we shall not shirk. We have given proof in this Chamber in the past few days that we shall give wholehearted support to the measures necessary to equip this State with the powers that are desired. That support, I pledge this House, will continue. In other directions, according to our opportunities, we shall make our full contribution to the national cause. May the war be swift and sure, and may the peace which follows stand proudly for ever on the shattered ruins of an evil name.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): I feel sure that at this grave moment, having listened to the moving speech of the Prime Minister, we should all wish to pay him a tribute of sympathy. But we are also in a mood of determination and resolution. The Deputy-Leader of the Opposition referred to the atmosphere of anger and apprehension which reigned in the House yesterday. Today, as he says, the atmosphere has so happily changed. Yet underneath those two phases of the mood of Parliament is our determination to see this thing lands may be lashed with the fury of its gales, but in our own hearts this Sunday morning there is peace. Our hands may be

through. The Deputy-Leader of the Opposition has paid an eloquent tribute to the restraint with which Poland has behaved during these last difficult weeks, and the courage and bravery that her troops are now showing in the field. Let me associate myself, on behalf of my hon. Friends, in full with the eloquent tribute which the Deputy-Leader of the Opposition paid to the Polish people and the Polish Army.

Let me also, if I may, in one word pay my tribute to the people of France, who have for so long been making such great preparations for the struggle with which we are now faced. I do not say that in organization we need yield anything to them. Great advances have been made in our organization for war, but in individual preparation, in the contributions which the men and women of the two countries are making to the common cause, I say that France at this moment is ahead of us. If you go to France and meet ten people in the streets you may be sure that eight of them have their places and their parts to play. Our people will do the same as time goes on, but let us have no doubt as to the determination with which the French people are facing this crisis. Let me only say in conclusion: let the world know that the British people are inexorably determined, as the Prime Minister said, to end this Nazi domination for ever, and to build a world order based on justice and freedom.

MR. CHURCHILL (C.): In this solemn hour it is a consolation to recall and to dwell upon our repeated efforts for peace. All have been ill-starred, but all have been faithful and sincere. This is of the highest moral value — and not only moral value, but practical value — at the present time, because the wholehearted concurrence of scores of millions of men and women, whose co-operation and brotherhood are indispensable, is the only foundation upon which the trial and tribulation of modern war can be endured and surmounted. This moral conviction alone affords that ever-fresh resilience which renews the strength and energy of people in long, doubtful and dark days. Outside, the storms of war may blow and the active, but our consciences are at rest.

We must not underrate the gravity of the task which lies



before us or the temerity of the ordeal, to which we shall not be found unequal. We must expect many disappointments and many unpleasant surprises, but we may be sure that the task which we have freely accepted is one not beyond the compass and the strength of the British Empire and the French Republic. The Prime Minister said it was a sad day, and that is indeed true, but at the present time there is another note which may be present, and that is a feeling of thankfulness that, if these great trials were to come upon our Island, there is a generation of Britons here now ready to prove itself not unworthy of the days of yore and not unworthy of those great men, the fathers of our land, who laid the foundations of our laws and shaped the greatness of our country.

This is not a question of fighting for Danzig or fighting for Poland. We are fighting to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defense of all that is most sacred to man. There is no war for domination or imperial aggrandizement or material gain; no war to shut any country out of its sunlight and means of progress. It is a war, viewed in its inherent quality, to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual, and it is a war to establish and revive the stature of man. Perhaps it might seem a paradox that a war undertaken in the name of liberty and right should require, as a necessary part of its processes, the surrender for the time being of so many of the dearly valued liberties and rights. In these last few days the House of Commons has been voting dozens of Bills which hand over to the executive our most dearly valued traditional liberties. We are sure that these liberties will be in hands which will not abuse them, which will use them for no class or party interests, which will cherish and guard them, and we look forward to the day, surely and confidently we look forward to the day when our liberties and rights will be restored to us, and when we shall be able to share them with the peoples to whom such blessings are unknown.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.) : This day is to me distressing and depressing, and I would not exchange places with the Prime Minister for all the wealth that this country possesses. I have

the most tremendous sympathy with him in the position in which he finds himself this morning, after having striven, by every means in his power, to avert this horrible catastrophe to mankind. We have travelled the road of peace with him, maligned and attacked from many quarters. In the paths of war we regret that we cannot accompany him in the ways that mankind is to be led in the near future, in this struggle that we have envisaged from our point of view, because of the contradictions, into which I do not intend to go this morning, as it is not fitting. But we do say that there are two things that are outstanding at this moment. One is that, after all the false propaganda that has gone on throughout this country, when it was stated that if you were to stand up to Hitler it meant peace, standing up to Hitler has ensured war, and believing that, and honestly disagreeing with other Members, who are as honest as we are in their point of view, we have stated all along that as threats would end in war, we could not even indulge in these idle threats.

The other thing in my estimation which has driven mankind along the path of war has been the defection of Russia. On Thursday, when I heard of the mobilization of Russia on the rear of the Polish army I saw in that action one of three courses, first, in conjunction with Hitler, to blackmail the Poles into surrender, and submission to his aims, or, second, that they intended to maintain neutrality but to hold a part of the Polish army in order to aid Hitler, or, third, that, along with Germany, they intended eventually to assist in the tearing apart of Poland for their own aims and their own use. If there have been any doubts in the mind of Hitler in going to war, the Soviet Government have the criminal responsibility of dissipating those views — [Interruption] — I intend to leave it at that, and to maintain my point of view in this country in spite of the taunts of any person either in this House or outside.

I sympathize this morning with the millions of workers in every country that is going to be involved — to mothers and fathers and sons in Germany, in France, in Austria, in Poland and in Britain and the possessions overseas. My heart goes out

to every human being who will be affected by this tragedy, the magnitude of which no man can conceive and the end no man can foretell. In these circumstances I regret that I cannot go along the road of public opinion. Public opinion is undoubtedly behind the Government. It has, by propaganda and by the actions of Hitler himself, been put behind the Government. That public opinion today is strong. It is, if I may say so, united even if it is against my own desires and point of view, but in the tragedy that will follow in six months' time, that opinion will not be so determined, so united or so strong. I am prepared at this stage to say to the Government that theirs is the task and the nation is behind them. But every man and woman who believes that it is his duty or her duty to support the Government, if they are honest and honorable in their intentions — I have no attack to make — every person who is of military age and believes in giving service that others should give I hope they will also give it themselves. For my part I regret that, after 2,000 years of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace, mankind, on Sunday morning, finds itself in this position, that men are on the eve of having to live like beasts, with lice and vermin crawling over them, grubbing for food, blinding and tearing bodies apart and blowing limbs asunder, and I say that in my estimation that is not going to solve any problem. That great human tragedy, that brutality, that fiendish cruelty that will be enacted on the fields of war is to be deplored and to be condemned, and do not let passions be roused to the extent that they are going to imagine that it will solve anything.

I look for a world of peace wherein Hitlerism can be eliminated, but the people who can pull Hitler down are the people in Germany, and Hitlerism is not confined to the frontiers of Germany. Hitlerism is to be found in every country in the world in the dealings of man with man and of groups of men with groups of men. My concluding words are these, I cannot support this country in this catastrophe. I do not regard it as being idealistic. I do not regard it as being for freedom, justice and human right. I regard it on both sides, the one who says "stop" and the other who says "go," as a hard, soulless, grinding materialist struggle for human gain, for the protec-

tion of selfish interests, and in that we will have no heart or part, but we hope that, at the earliest possible moment, the peoples of the world, in Germany and in other countries, will rise and revolt and overthrow the tyrannies which exist, and will establish the rule of peace and comfort upon earth.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, the House will recall the communication to the German Government that we made on September 1 and which I reported to your Lordships.\* In that communication, your Lordships will remember, we instructed His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin to inform the German Foreign Minister that, unless the German Government were prepared immediately to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland, and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would, without hesitation, fulfill their obligations to Poland. That communication was made more than thirty-six hours ago and at 7:30 last night, when your Lordships met, I was still not in a position to report any reply received from the German Government. But I repeated that His Majesty's Government would be bound to take action unless the German forces were withdrawn from Polish territory, and I added that we were in communication with the French Government as to the limit of time within which it would be necessary for His Majesty's Government and the French Government to know whether the German Government were prepared to effect such withdrawal.

In view of reports reaching His Majesty's Government of intensified action against Poland, His Majesty's Government concluded that the situation admitted of no further delay. Accordingly we sent a telegram to the Ambassador last night instructing him to ask for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Berlin at nine o'clock this morning and to

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\* See No. 45

make to him or, if he was not able to receive him, to a representative of the German Government, the communication which I will read to the House in one moment. We added that if the assurance referred to in that communication was received the Ambassador was to inform me by any means at his disposal before 11 a.m. today. If on the other hand no such assurance was received here by 11 a.m. we should inform the German representative in London that a state of war existed as from that hour and the Ambassador in Berlin would act accordingly.

This was the communication that we instructed His Majesty's Ambassador to make:

[See the text of the instructions on page 241]

We had a telegram from the Ambassador to say that he had carried out those instructions this morning at 9 a.m., the communication being received on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am in a position to indicate that the French Ambassador in Berlin is at this moment making a similar communication to the German Government accompanied also by a definite time limit in accordance with the arrangement made between His Majesty's Government and the French Government. No reply having been received from the German Government accepting the conditions of His Majesty's Government, a state of war now exists between this country and Germany and passports have been handed to the German Chargé d'Affaires in London. It only remains for me to add that during these days His Majesty's Government have been in constant communication with the Polish Government, both through the Polish Ambassador in London and through His Majesty's Ambassador in Warsaw. I am confident that the whole country will be at one in their admiration for the courage and the resolution of the Polish Government and people, and will be inspired by that feeling in their determination to render to them all help in their power.

There is one other matter of a more technical kind on which I must say a word. In the financial sphere, the most complete arrangements have been made for meeting the situation. At the Privy Council, which His Majesty is holding at Buckingham Palace, the necessary Order in Council is being

made to establish Defense Regulations for the strict control of the exchanges. The details will be stated in the wireless announcement which is about to be made. A Proclamation is being issued which will declare that tomorrow, Monday, is, so far as banks are concerned, a Bank Holiday. This will also apply to Post Office Savings Banks and other Savings banks but not to general business. Banks will be open as usual on Tuesday morning for transacting business.

LORD SNELL (Lab.): My Lords, the House will perhaps expect one or two words following the statement which the noble Viscount has made. What I shall say will be very short indeed. The spirit of peace and reason which we hoped would prevail has failed and the way of force has been chosen. We cannot avoid the consequences. We have no alternative for the time being except to meet force with force. It is impossible to say what the outcome will be and yet, as we face the peril, we do so sustained and fortified in our souls that the right for which men have lived and died will somehow not be put to the worst.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE (L.): My Lords, in adding a few words to what has fallen from Lord Snell, I merely desire to say, what I am sure we must all feel, that the noble Viscount opposite has done everything that a man could do, in concert with the Prime Minister and his colleagues, to find the way of peace if it could be found consistently with the honor of the country. I fear it is only too evident that, from the very first, these efforts were doomed to failure, that the war mind of the German Government was such that its character could in no way be changed. The only other observation I would make is to express satisfaction that the French Government have, all through, acted in close concert with His Majesty's Government. We feel that that country will play its part in circumstances, in some respects, of — I will not say even greater danger but closer danger than was the part it played from 1914 to 1918. And I must join the noble Viscount opposite in expressing our deep and unqualified sympathy with the Polish nation, which is standing out so bravely for the ordinary rights of mankind.

48. WAR IN POLAND. LOANS TO POLAND.  
(SEPTEMBER 7, 1939)\*

MUSSOLINI'S *initiative for peace* (See No. 46) was abandoned on September 4, 1939. The Polish-French Alliance was strengthened by the following Protocol signed in Paris on September 4, 1939:

*"The Polish Government and the French Government, desiring to assure the full efficacy of the Polish-French Alliance, and having especially in view the present situation of the League of Nations, agree to confirm that their mutual obligations of assistance in the event of aggression by a third Power continue to be founded on the Agreements of Alliance in force.*

*At the same time they declare that henceforth they interpret the said Agreements as embodying the following obligations:*

*Article 1*

*The undertaking of the two Contracting Parties mutually to render all aid and assistance in their power at once and from the outbreak of hostilities between one of the Contracting Parties and a European Power in consequence of that Power's aggression against the said Contracting Party, equally applies to the case of any action by a European Power which manifestly directly or indirectly threatens the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and is of such a nature that the Party in question considers it vital to resist that aggression with its armed forces.*

*Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the in-*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 579.

*dependence of neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that Contracting Party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.*

*Article 2*

*The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent military, naval, and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.*

*Article 3*

*1) The Contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.*

*2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.*

*3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in those undertakings and the third State concerned.*

*Article 4*

*Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.*

*The present Protocol, constituting an integral part of the Polish-French Agreements of 1921 and 1925, shall remain in force as long as the said Agreements.*

*The present Protocol comes into force on signature.*

*Done in Paris. September 4, 1939.*

*JULJUSZ LUKASIEWICZ  
GEORGES BONNET."*



*In the meantime the war on the Polish front was being waged with the full strength of both the German and Polish Armies. The German Army had about 3,000,000 men in 52 active divisions, 30 reserve and 30 Landwehr divisions (altogether about 112 divisions). Of these about 72 were directed against Poland, including 7 panzer divisions, 4 light panzer divisions, and 4 motorized divisions. On her western front (Maginot Line) Germany had only about 11 active divisions, 2 divisions for defense of strongholds, some Landwehr and some reserve divisions. The German Luftwaffe had about 4,000 planes of the first line and about 700 transport planes. The German panzer force had about 5,500 tanks of the first line.*

*Poland, on the other hand, defended herself with only about 40 infantry divisions. But, in view of the fact that mobilization was first delayed for political reasons, and later interrupted by the attack of the German Luftwaffe, the strength of the whole Polish Army was actually equivalent to no more than 29 infantry divisions, 11 cavalry brigades and 1 motorized brigade. The Polish Air Force had about 770 planes. Of these about 420 were planes in the first line and included 90 old-model planes. The Polish Panzer Force had about 600 tanks and of these about 420 were light reconnaissance tanks.*

*At the beginning of September 1939 the French Army had about 111 divisions, 3,000 tanks and 1,400 planes of which about 500 were new-model planes.*

*At the outbreak of the war the British Army was very weak. During September 1939 they were able to send to France only about 5 infantry divisions and about 250 tanks.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): The House will, I am sure, realize that it is impossible for me to give more than a general indication of our defenses. There is necessarily a number of matters to which, in the public interest, it is impossible for me to refer.

With that necessary preamble I will give the House a résumé of the position.

In the East the Poles are fighting hard against a strong and ruthless enemy, who is relying on the weight of numbers

and material to crush all opposition. The Polish soldier has ever shown himself to be a courageous and determined fighter; and, today, he is worthily maintaining this tradition. Against overwhelming superiority in the air, outnumbered and outgunned, he is contesting every yard of the German advance.

The Germans have often stressed the need for a short war and a quick decision. In pursuance of this idea the German plan appears to be to concentrate their first main effort against Poland, and as the House is aware, that country was invaded just over a week ago without any formal declaration of war. In spite of the human and material losses which they have already suffered, the morale and courage of the Polish people remain unaffected. His Majesty's Government and the French Government have today signed an agreement with the Polish Government for the provision of further financial assistance to Poland to enable her to replenish her resources.

In the West, France has, like ourselves, mobilized her forces with complete efficiency and smoothness, and they are now in contact with the enemy on their common frontier. Certain information has been published of what has taken place but, for obvious reasons, no details can yet be disclosed. The outbreak of war has found the same spirit, determination, and solidarity among the French people as is evident here. The understanding between the two countries is complete, and the arrangements, which have now been put into force, for co-operation in all the activities concerned with the prosecution of the war are working smoothly and well.

49. WAR IN POLAND. POLISH-FRENCH  
MILITARY CONVENTION.  
(SEPTEMBER 13, 1939)\*

GERMAN ATTACKS encircled the Polish Army from the north (East Prussia) and from the south (Slovakia) causing the withdrawal of the Polish Armies far to the east. The uniformity of the front was thus broken down. Nevertheless, Marshal Rydz-Smigly persisted in upholding his decision to fight. On September 11, 1939 he decided to create cores of resistance: a) Warsaw, which had been defending itself since September 8; b) Polesie; and, c) Eastern Galicia along the Dniestr River and the frontier of allied Rumania. Their task was to delay great enemy forces as long as possible, thus giving time for the preparation of the promised Allied offensive in the west.

The aggressive operations of the French Army against the Germans were agreed upon in the Polish-French Military Convention of 1921, as well as in the protocol of the meetings of Polish Minister of Military Affairs Gen. Kasprzycki with Gen. Gamelin, held in Paris in May 1939. The protocol, signed on May 19, 1939 reads as follows:

"The French and Polish High Commands, acting within the limits of decisions made by their two Governments and having exchanged

a) their points of view on German forces and strategic possibilities

b) information about the forces and possibilities of the Polish and French Armies from the point of view of mobilization and concentration

have agreed on the following:

I. In case of German aggression against Poland or in case of a threat to her vital interests in Danzig which will cause Poland to resort to armed action, the French Army

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 655-658, 674.

*will automatically put into action its diverse armed forces as follows:*

*1) France will immediately put her Air Force into action according to a plan prepared in advance.*

*2) As soon as part of her Army is ready (about the 3rd day of mobilization)\* France will proceed against Germany on chosen objectives.*

*3) Whenever the German Army's principal effort is concentrated on Poland, France will begin offensive operation against Germany with the greater bulk of her Army (about the 15th day of mobilization)*

*II. In the first phase of the war Poland will engage all her forces in defensive action against the Germans taking up the offensive only when circumstances will permit it and under such general conditions as are envisaged by the two Commands.*

*III. Inversely, if the bulk of the German forces should attack France, particularly through Belgium or Switzerland, the Polish Army will endeavor to engage in battle as much of the German forces as possible, under such general conditions as are envisaged by the two Commands.*

*IV. In order to reinforce the potential materiel of the Polish Army the two High Commands recognize it as essential to the common interest that France should immediately give materiel and financial aid to the Polish Government. This aid will be for the purpose of increasing positively the force of the Polish Army and for developing war industries in Poland for the needs of the Polish Army as much as for the needs of Poland's allies in the eastern theatre of operations.*

*V. The two High Commands consider it indispensable to continue the most detailed conversations having as their aim the development of the principles contained in this protocol.*

*Paris, May 19, 1939*

*/-/ Kasprzycki*

*/-/ Gamelin"*

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*\* After the first day of French mobilization.*

*In view of the conditions of this protocol the Polish General Staff expected a French attack on about the 16th of September.*

*As for Great Britain, it was agreed during the Polish-British military conferences held in Warsaw in May, 1939, that in case of a German attack on Poland, the British Air Force would immediately intervene and bomb Germany in the same way that the Luftwaffe bombed Poland.*

*In reality, neither the promised offensive of the French Army nor the promised intervention of the British Air Force ever came.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : The House will have learned from the communiqué issued last night that the Supreme War Council met for the first time yesterday, on French soil. I think it is fitting that I should begin my progress report this week with an account of the meeting. It was attended, as the House knows, by Lord Chatfield and myself for Great Britain, and by M. Daladier and General Gamelin for France. The representatives of both countries were accompanied by a number of officials, but, as we were already in close touch with the French authorities on technical strategic questions, it was not intended to discuss such questions at the meeting, and the Chiefs of Staff were not, therefore, on this occasion summoned to attend. The object of the meeting was to make possible, at the earliest practicable stage in the war, a direct and personal exchange of views. The present situation was fully examined and the measures to be taken in the immediate future were discussed. Further meetings will be arranged as and when necessary, in order to ensure that the closest possible contact is maintained between our two countries on all major aspects of the conduct of the war...

For the moment, the Eastern theatre of war is still the main centre of operations. The Germans appear to be endeavoring to force a decision in this theatre before they are compelled to transfer formations to the West to meet the threat of Allied intervention. With this object in view, they have continued their relentless pressure on the Polish Army,

hoping thereby to break resistance and to turn a hardly-contested withdrawal into a retreat. That these hopes have been so far frustrated is due to the indomitable spirit of the Poles, who refuse to be intimidated by the weight of material brought against them or by the overwhelming superiority of the German Air Force.

In the West the French Armies have begun a methodical advance. Hitherto, these operations have been local, with the object of straightening out the line and gaining contact with the main enemy positions. This is an essential and important preliminary phase, about which the French are naturally reticent, and it is sufficient to say that it has been completely successful.

Certain statements have been made to the effect that the British Expeditionary Force has already been engaged in France. These statements are not strictly accurate, and are principally the result of the highly imaginative reports of foreign correspondents, over whose activities we, unfortunately, have no control. Nevertheless, it is true that British troops are already in France, though they have not been in action. When this happens, as full information as the exigencies of the military situation permit will at once be issued.

In the air the normal work of reconnaissance and patrol has been continuous, and a number of Royal Air Force Squadrons are now operating from the French soil.

Further successful reconnaissance flights over Germany have been carried out by the Bomber Command in this country, and much useful information has been gained, in the course of these flights, of activities behind the German frontier.

Defensive patrols proceed continuously, and the Higher Command remains in a state of instant readiness.

The Coastal Command have continued to carry out extended reconnaissance and anti-submarine patrols, and a number of attacks have been carried out against enemy submarines.

On the seas, the outbreak of the war found the active Fleet fully prepared and the Reserve Fleet mobilized, but that did not include the whole of the very numerous auxiliaries

which when war begins have to be brought forward to complete our sea power. These forces are now passing rapidly into service.

The Fleet has been joined by three destroyers of the Polish Navy, which have proved to be very efficient and are taking part in the strenuous life of our light forces.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): I should like to join in the tribute of thanks which the Deputy-Leader of the Opposition paid to the Prime Minister for his statement this afternoon. That statement was rendered notable by the Prime Minister's account of the first meeting of the Supreme War Council. It was gratifying to all of us to know that all the major aspects of the conduct of the war were discussed, that complete identity of the views prevailed, and that there will be harmony in action. There was one point which we were particularly glad to hear, and that was the clear statement that both Governments are determined fully to honor their obligations to Poland. I should like to put to the Lord Privy Seal, who is to reply, a point which occurred to me when I saw the communiqué making the announcement, and which I find has also occurred to a number of my friends, and that is, why the Polish Government were not represented on the Supreme War Council, and whether they will be so represented in the future. At any rate, it was clear that the Supreme War Council determined to honor the obligations of the two countries towards Poland, and that they fully realized the relentless pressure on the Polish armies which those armies are so gallantly withstanding. There are many other issues raised in the statement of the Prime Minister on which it would be tempting to comment, but on which it is impossible to form a full judgment without being in possession of data which, of course, it is impossible for the Prime Minister to give to the House.

## 50. BOMBING OF OPEN TOWNS (SEPTEMBER 13, 1939)\*

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 the German Government sent a note to the Polish Government (through the Netherlands Legation) in which it was stated that the German Luftwaffe had been instructed to limit its bombing activity to military targets only. This note is as follows:

*“Die deutschen Luftstreitkräfte haben den Befehl erhalten, sich bei ihren Kampfhandlungen auf militärische Objekte zu beschränken. Es ist eine selbstverständliche Voraussetzung für die Aufrechterhaltung dieses Befehls, dass die polnischen Luftstreitkräfte sich an die gleiche Regel halten. Sollte das nicht der Fall sein, so wird deutscherseits sofort schärfste Vergeltung geübt werden.”*

On the same day Chancellor Hitler said in his speech in the Reichstag:

*“I will not wage war against women and children! I have instructed my Air Force to limit their attacks to military objectives. But should the enemy think this gives him carte blanche to fight in the opposite way, then he will get an answer which will drive him out of his senses!”*

On September 12 the German High Command issued the following communiqué:

*“The German Government are said to be increasingly perturbed at franc-tireur activity, which, they say, seems to have begun with the resistance of the civil population of Warsaw to the entry of the German motorized divisions into the city.*

*They allege that it has since spread and is reported even behind the lines, while acts of sabotage are also tak-*

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1051-1052.



*ing place. The German Air Force has taken to dropping pamphlets over the capital warning the population to cease resistance, failing which the bombing of the town is threatened."*

*The above-mentioned facts caused Lord Halifax to make the following statement in the House of Lords:*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : . . . Your Lordships may have seen reports of an announcement made by the German High Command in the course of this morning, of their intention to bomb and shell open towns, villages and hamlets in Poland, in order to crush resistance by the civilian population. Of that announcement, of which I in common with your Lordships have seen the published report, we have as yet no official confirmation, but I would say this. First of all, if it is true, it would seem to be in direct contradiction of the statement of purpose expressed by the German Chancellor in his Reichstag speech, when he disclaimed any desire to make war on women and children; and in the second place, whatever may be the rights of a belligerent army as against franc-tireurs, there can, I imagine, be no sort of justification for what must be indiscriminate bombardment, whether from the land or from the air, of the civilian population. As I have said, the restrictions that His Majesty's Government have imposed upon the operations of their own forces were based upon the condition of similar restraint being observed by their opponents, and His Majesty's Government must hold themselves completely free, if such restraint is not in fact observed, to take such action as they may deem appropriate.

51. WAR WITH GAS AND BOMBING  
OF OPEN TOWNS  
(SEPTEMBER 14, 1939) \*

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 *President Roosevelt broadcast an appeal over the radio that warring nations abstain from the bombardment of open cities and civilian populations. This appeal is as follows:*

*"The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during the course of the hostilities which have raged in various quarters of the earth in the past few years, which have resulted in the maiming and death of thousands of defenseless women and children, has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity. . . I am therefore addressing this urgent appeal to every Government, which may be engaged in hostilities, publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event and under no circumstances undertake bombardment from the air of civilian populations or unfortified cities, upon the understanding that the same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all their opponents. I request an immediate reply."*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, I am very grateful to the noble Viscount opposite and to the noble Lord who leads the Opposition for giving me this opportunity to supplement what I was able to say yesterday.\*\* On the question of gas, if I may deal with that first, the position is that our Ambassador in Berlin, when asking for his passports from the German Government, presented a Note inquiring whether Germany would observe the terms of

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<sup>†</sup> House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1058-1060.

<sup>\*†</sup> See No. 50.

the Geneva Gas Protocol of 1925, which prohibits the use of poisonous and asphyxiating gases and bacteriological methods of warfare. The German Government have now replied in the affirmative to this inquiry, through the Swiss Minister in London who is in charge of their interests. With your Lordships' permission I will read a translation of this answer, which is quite short:

"The German Government will observe for the duration of the war the prohibitions which form the subject of the Geneva Protocol of June 17, 1925, and are mentioned in Lord Halifax's Note of September 3, 1939. It reserves full liberty of action in the event of the provisions of the Protocol being infringed by the enemy."

On the other question of President Roosevelt's appeal, I find that in addition to his words in the Reichstag on September 1, which I quoted yesterday, Herr Hitler did in fact send a reply to the President through the United States Chargé d' Affaires in Berlin. Your Lordships will no doubt be glad to hear its terms, although I understand it has already been published. These are the words:

"The view, expressed in the message of President Roosevelt, that it is a humanitarian principle to refrain from the bombing of non-military objectives under all circumstances in connection with military operations corresponds completely with my own point of view and has been assumed by me before. I therefore unconditionally endorse the request that the Governments taking part in the hostilities now in progress may publicly make a declaration in this sense. For my own part I assume that you have noticed in my Reichstag speech of today that the German Air Force has received the order to restrict its operations to military objectives. It is a self-evident prerequisite for the maintenance of this order that opposing Air Forces adhere to the same rule."

LORD STRABOLGI (L.) : My Lords, before we leave this question I would like to ask the Foreign Secretary a question, but as I have not given him notice if he does not wish to answer

it I will immediately accept what he says but I think he will be able to reply and it is not a question which should embarrass him in any way. Does he understand from the German Declarations which he has read to your Lordships that this applies to all fronts or only to a war which might, at the moment those declarations were made, be expected between the German Government and ourselves? I ask that because I understand that not even now has there been a formal declaration of war by the German Government on Poland. I think it might be useful if the noble Viscount could inform your Lordships whether he reads into those declarations that the war, so to speak, is indivisible, and that the same rule should apply to all fronts, even if there has been no formal declaration of war, as in the case of Poland. I apologize for putting this question at short notice, but I also spoke at short notice and briefly yesterday and some of my noble friends and some supporters of the noble Viscount pointed out to me that I had appeared to suggest that we should not engage in reprisals unless we were attacked, and that this might be misinterpreted abroad among our Allies as seeking to humanize the war on our own front, and being indifferent to what was happening on their fronts; whereas I need hardly tell your Lordships that, like every one of your Lordships, I regard an attack on any of our Allies by illegal methods as an attack upon ourselves.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: My Lords, I cannot, I am afraid, claim to have any more information or knowledge as to the precise meaning of this Note than is available to any one of your Lordships as appearing on the surface of the terms of the Note. But, so far as I can form a judgment, in reply to the noble Lord, there is certainly no limitation expressed or, I would have thought, implied in the terms of the Note; and indeed the wording makes reference to "the Governments taking part in the hostilities now in progress." I would have thought, reading the Note as a layman, if any restriction of area had been in the mind of the speaker, it would almost certainly have been expressed.

## 52. BOMBING OF OPEN TOWNS (SEPTEMBER 20, 1939)\*

THE STATE DEPARTMENT in Washington published a telegram dated September 8, 1939 from the American Ambassador in Poland, Mr. A. J. Drexel Biddle, declaring that the German Air Force was "taking advantage of every opportunity, without regard to the danger for the civilian population which may be involved." The Ambassador then cited a number of instances, namely:

*"Attacks on my villa and that of my neighbor; a heavy attack on modern apartment buildings in the suburbs of Warsaw situated one kilometre from military barracks; the destruction of a sanatorium, involving the death of 10 children, in woods near Otwock; the bombing of a refugee train on the way from Kutno. . ."*

MR. A. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Lord Privy Seal, as representing the Minister of Information, whether His Majesty's Government have any official confirmation of the statement issued by Herr Hitler's headquarters that the German air force were intending to bomb open towns and the civilian population of Poland; and whether His Majesty's Government have now any official information of the extent to which such bombing of open towns and the civilian population of Poland has already taken place.

SIR E. GRIGG: His Majesty's Government have, of course, no longer any official contact with Germany, but the statement referred to was broadcast from Berlin and has been corroborated from so many reliable sources that there can be no reasonable doubt as to its authenticity. As regards the se-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 956-957.  
See also Nos. 50-51.

cond part of the question, the hon. Member will no doubt have seen in the Press accounts of the reports which Mr. Biddle, the United States Ambassador to Poland, has furnished to his Government. Information received from His Majesty's Ambassador is such as to confirm the facts described by Mr. Biddle, including the bombardment of the entirely undefended village in which the foreign missions accredited to Poland were at the time accomodated.

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : Now that His Majesty's Ambassador to Poland,\* after gallantly risking his life in the pursuance of his duty, is on the way home, may we be assured that full information will be obtained from him as to the extent of these alleged atrocities?

SIR E. GRIGG: Certainly.

MR. A. HENDERSON: In view of the undertaking that was given by His Majesty's Government following the appeal of the President of the United States, can the hon. Member say whether His Majesty's Government are keeping in contact with President Roosevelt on this matter?

SIR E. GRIGG: I hope my hon. Friend will address that question to the appropriate Department.

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\* Sir Howard William Kennard



## Part III

### The Stab in the Back

SEPTEMBER 20 TO OCTOBER 3, 1939.

#### 53. RUSSIA ATTACKS POLAND (SEPTEMBER 20, 1939)\*

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1939, at dawn, Russian armies crossed the Polish frontier.

The President of Poland and the Polish Government were, on that day, on Polish territory in the town of Kutu. It was only the next day, on September 18, that, as a result of the Russian attack, they crossed into Rumania. By an agreement between the Polish and Rumanian Governments, Rumania was to give to the Polish President and the Polish Government the right either to pass through Rumanian territory or to remain as guests on Rumanian soil, but without the right to conduct any political activity. The Polish Government chose the former, intending to go to France to continue the fight, but on September 19, the President and the Government were interned by Rumanian authorities.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 975-1003, 1015-1017.



*On Polish territory the fight with the Germans and the Russians continued: Warsaw defended herself until September 29; the fighting in Polesie went on until October 5. In many localities the invading Soviet armies were fired on by Polish detachments.*

*On September 18, the British Government made public the following announcement:*

*"The British Government have considered the situation created by the attack upon Poland ordered by the Soviet Government. This attack made upon Great Britain's ally at a moment when she is prostrate in the face of overwhelming forces brought against her by Germany cannot, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be justified by the arguments put forward by the Soviet Government.*

*The full implication of these events is not yet apparent, but His Majesty's Government take the opportunity of stating that nothing that has occurred can make any difference to the determination of His Majesty's Government, with the full support of the country, to fulfill their obligations to Poland and to prosecute the war with all energy until their objectives have been achieved."*

*The Russian invasion of Poland startled the United States. The best illustration of the opinion of the American press was given by an editorial in the New York Times of September 18, 1939 which stated:*

*"Germany having killed the prey, Soviet Russia will seize that part of the carcass that Germany cannot use. It will play the noble role of hyena to the German lion. . . At last the issue stands clear. Hitlerism is Brown Communism; Stalinism is Red Fascism. The world will now understand that the only real ideological issue is one between democracy, liberty, and peace on the one hand, and despotism, terror, and war on the other."*

*On September 19, Hitler gave a speech in Danzig in which he described the German war aims in the following words:*

*"Germany's political aims are limited. We shall come*

*to an understanding with Russia about this, as she is the nearest neighbor whom this affects. We shall never go to war about this, because German aspirations are limited. . . I have no war aims against England and France. I have tried to maintain peace with these countries and to establish friendly relations between the British and the German nations. I have also told France that I have no further aspirations in the west. . . Poland will never arise again in the form laid down by the Versailles Treaty. Not only Germany, but also Russia guarantees this."*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : Events have occurred in the last week of such far-reaching importance that there has not yet been time to estimate their effect on the fortunes of war and on the attitudes of other countries.

In my statement on September 13\* I referred to the relentless German pressure on the Polish army which had so far been frustrated by the indomitable spirit of the Poles. This pressure and this resistance continued during the week, and is still continuing in many parts of Poland. The tide of German invasion eastwards has reached an approximate north-south line through Brest-Litovsk and Lemberg, though there still remain islands of Polish resistance, such as Warsaw, which refuse to be submerged. On September 17 an event occurred which has inevitably had a decisive effect upon the war on the Eastern Front. On the morning of September 17 Russian troops crossed the Polish frontier at points along its whole length and advanced into Poland.

I cannot say that the action of the Soviet Government was unexpected. For some time past Soviet troops have been mobilized and concentrated on the western frontiers of the Soviet Union, and statements have appeared in the Soviet Press and wireless referring to the position of White Russians and Ukrainians in Poland, which bore the interpretation that the Soviet Government were preparing for intervention.

On September 17 a note was handed to the Polish Am-

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\* See No. 49.

bassador in Moscow to the effect that Warsaw as the capital of Poland no longer existed, that the Polish Government had disintegrated, and that the Polish State and its Government had ceased to exist. In the same way the agreements concluded between the Soviet Union and Poland had come to an end. Poland had become a suitable field for all manner of hazards and surprises which might constitute a threat to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could, therefore, no longer preserve a neutral attitude, and the Soviet Government had ordered their troops to cross the frontier and take under their protection the life and property of the population of the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia. The Polish Ambassador in Moscow refused to accept this note, and has since been instructed to ask for his passports.

A copy of this communication was sent to His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow with a note stating that the Soviet Government would pursue a policy of neutrality in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. A similar communication was made to the diplomatic representatives of foreign Powers in Moscow.

In this situation, His Majesty's Government authorized the issue of a statement on September 18 that this attack by the Soviet Government upon Poland (a country with whom she had a non-aggression pact) at a moment when Poland was prostrate in the face of overwhelming forces brought against her by Germany could not be justified by the arguments put forward and, that while the full implication of these events was not yet apparent, nothing which had occurred would make any difference to the determination of His Majesty's Government to fulfill their obligations to Poland and to prosecute the war with all energy until these obligations had been achieved.

The effects of the Russian invasion upon the hard-pressed Poles have naturally been very serious. Caught between two vast armies, and with their communications to the South cut off, the Polish forces are still continuing their courageous resistance. According to a communiqué issued on September 18 the Polish Government have requested the Rumanian Government to accord hospitality to the Head of the Polish State and

to his Ministers who have taken refuge on Rumanian territory.

His Majesty's Ambassador to Poland, who was established in the Polish town of Kutu, near the Rumanian frontier, was advised by the Polish Government to leave Poland as soon as Russian troops crossed the frontier, and he is now in Rumania with his staff. I would like to say a word of sympathy with Sir Howard Kennard and the members of his staff, as well as His Majesty's Consular Officers in Poland. They have had to suffer such an ordeal of anxiety, fatigue and danger as seldom falls to the lot of members of their Services, but I need hardly say that they have carried out their duties with the courage, efficiency and disregard of personal considerations which we should expect of them.

It is still too early to pronounce any final verdict on the motives or consequences of the Russian action. For the unhappy victim of this cynical attack the result has been a tragedy of the grimmest character. The world which has watched the vain struggle of the Polish nation against overwhelming odds with profound pity and sympathy admires their valor which even now refuses to admit defeat. If Britain and France have been unable to avert the defeat of the armies of Poland they have assured her that they have not forgotten their obligations to her nor weakened in their determination to carry on the struggle.

Against the background of these events, Herr Hitler chose yesterday to address another speech to the world. It is not our way in this country to speak with boasts and threats. Perhaps for that very reason the German leaders have difficulty in understanding us, but in such comments as I have to make on the Chancellor's speech, I shall not depart from our custom of speaking soberly and quietly.

The speech which Herr Hitler made yesterday at Danzig does not change the situation with which we are confronted. It gave an account of recent events which we cannot accept as accurate and, as the commentary broadcast by the B.B.C. last night clearly showed, it contained certain assurances of the kind which in recent years Herr Hitler has repudiated whenever it suited his purpose.

Among the many mis-statements of fact I wish to refer in particular to the statement that the French Government agreed to Italian mediation while His Majesty's Government refused it. The reply to this statement is contained in the communiqué issued by the official Italian news agency on September 4, which was reproduced in the recent White Paper and which clearly brought out the common attitude adopted by the British and French Governments. I have since noted a strong communiqué, issued today by the French Government, which emphatically supports our attitude. I hope that a supplementary White Paper which will be issued tomorrow will make plain the true course of recent events so that public opinion may have no difficulty in forming its final judgment.

Herr Hitler says much in his speech about the humane methods by which he has waged war. I can only say that methods are not made humane by calling them so and that the accounts of German bombing of open towns and machine gunning of refugees have shocked the whole world. What I have searched for in vain in this speech is one single word that Herr Hitler remembers the brave men who have already lost their lives in this quarrel of his making, or their wives and children who have been bereft for ever of the head of the family because their leader's lust for power had to be satisfied.

I have only one general comment to make. Our general purpose in this struggle is well known. It is to redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression and enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties. No threats will deter us or our French allies from this purpose. His Majesty's Government did not seek this war. They did, as the published documents show, repeatedly state their readiness for a peaceful settlement by negotiation. They persevered in their attempts to secure this up to and even after the striking of the first blow, but their efforts were set at nought, and their hopes shattered, by the unprovoked and brutal aggression of Germany upon our Polish allies...

Let me conclude by quoting the words of a famous Polish

General, who in bidding good-bye to a recent allied military mission said:

“We shall fight. A large part of our country will be over-run and we shall suffer terribly. But if you come in, we know that we shall rise again.”

MR. ARTHUR GREENWOOD (Lab.) : I think that, as the days go by, the Prime Minister's statements become of increasing importance to Members of this House, and I think I can say that, on all sides of the House, we welcome them. We welcome their increasing frankness, and long may that frankness continue. Since the right hon. Gentleman spoke last week there has been a change in the international scene. The right hon. Gentlemen spoke today with some firmness, but with some reticence as to what may be the outcome of the events of Sunday and the days since. Another Power has committed an act of aggression. There can be no doubt as to the fact. There can be no doubt that the justification of it was a justification which reasonable people, who had seen as we have seen previous acts of aggression, could not accept for one moment. But it is difficult to weigh the reactions and the repercussions of the events of Sunday (September 17) and the days since then.

A new factor has entered into an already complicated situation. Speculation is useless, but it will be necessary for us all to watch closely the unfolding of events before we can see where the balance of advantage lies. I would not, therefore, at this stage pursue this subject any further, but one thing I must say. It is a matter of very deep regret that, once an understanding was reached with Poland, she was not provided far more generously with sorely-needed assistance. I would like, if I may, to support the tribute paid by the Prime Minister to a magnificently heroic nation fighting against heavy odds, ill-equipped, but with an unconquerable spirit, a nation whose spirit, in the words of the Polish General, will rise again. I would pay my tribute to Sir Howard Kennard and his staff for their bravery in very difficult circumstances.

It may be that what help we could have given to Poland would not have enabled her, successfully, to resist the terrific

onslaught of both the Germans and the Russians. That may be, but it lies on my conscience and on that of other Members of the House, that we did not do rather more for her before this terrible trial came upon her. However that may be, the lesson to be drawn from it is an important one. It is that in future such help as we give to our friends should be quick, certain and generous. Unless in the immediate future help is given without delays and without petty haggling, those who might become active allies may be driven, very unwillingly, to become passive friends. I believe that it is profoundly important now, and as the days go by it becomes increasingly important, that this nation should mobilize behind it all possible resources that it can, whether it be in the spirit of benevolent neutrality or more actively, and the Government now, without delay, and with a courage and boldness that I do not think they have shown in the past, should go out into the world, unashamedly, to make friends because, though we can win without them, we would rather have them with us.

The Prime Minister's statement and the statement published in the Press yesterday morning on this new situation was, I think, welcomed by everyone. It made clear to the world, to friend and foe alike, that the temporary eclipse of Poland as an independent State in no way modified our determination to put a final end to aggression. For that emphatic statement, repeated by the Prime Minister in the House this afternoon in rather more colorful language, we are thankful. I am quite satisfied that in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the British people is the firm and unalterable intention not to be diverted from our main task by spurious offers of so-called peace, but steadily to pursue the struggle, until the spirit of tyranny is broken not merely by force of arms, but by the more terrible weapons of intellectual and moral opinion.

Herr Hitler in his speech last night to which the right hon. Gentleman, as I anticipated, referred was, as usual, contemptuous in his attitude towards Britain. I am not surprised. It is part of a long-developed technique. But I would say that his outpourings last night will have no effect on the people of this country. It is obvious that he completely misapprehends

the mind of Britain and fails to realize the fact that Poland being temporarily dismembered and disabled, does not weaken but strengthens our resolve to render similar future acts of aggression for ever impossible. His profession that he harbors no ill-will towards Britain and France falls on deaf ears. He is attempting, wherever he raises the swastika, to crush and destroy the spirit which is the very life of the British and French peoples. I have said before in this House, and I say it again, that an attack on the liberty of one is an attack on the liberty of all. Liberty like peace, is one and indivisible, and until he realizes that, I fear that Herr Hitler does not understand where Britain is today. His promises, such as they were, are equally unheeded. He has made promises before, and he has repeatedly broken them. Europe is strewn with the litter of all his broken pledges. There can, therefore, be no trusting one whose philosophy permits the breaking of the pledged word and who is the archangel of a system of society whose power rests on the suppression and the subjugation of the human mind and the human spirit by methods of uncontrolled tyranny. I have said that because I believe it to be true and because I believe that it reflects the minds of the vast majority of my hon. Friends.\*

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): The Prime Minister referred to the rather terrible event which took place on Sunday (September 17) when the Russian armies crossed the Polish frontier. I do not think that the mood of moral indignation is

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\* On September 18, 1939 Mr. A. Greenwood sent the following message to the Labor Party:

I realize to the full the feelings of members of the Labor Movement about yesterday's news.

The U.S.S.R. has invaded Poland. She has done so on grounds which cannot be justified and which have been used previously by Hitler as excuses for his monstrous outrages.

No one can foretell what may happen next. It is idle to speculate, but what we must do is to face realities. The new situation, however it may develop, will gravely increase our difficulties.

It is folly to pretend otherwise. The struggle will be sterner, but whatever may befall cannot alter the issue by one iota.

The British working-class Movement has adopted a definite and unalterable attitude against aggression wherever and by whomsoever it is committed.

It has accepted the challenge thrown out by Germany. It will not now turn its back on the Polish people who are the latest victims of aggression, alas, on two fronts.



of the slightest use in contemplating the events and disappointments which we are undoubtedly likely to encounter during the course of this war. Peace can only be preserved upon the basis of moral law, because it is only on that basis that you can reconcile the conflicting claims and interests of different nations. Therefore, indignation at breaches of the moral law in times of peace is natural, logical and just. Now that we are at war and that national self-interest, shortsighted or enlightened, will rule the policies of all nations, moral indignation is out of place. Moreover, we must remember this. On September 17 the Poles were very hard pressed. Poland was not finally and completely defeated and her armies were still fighting gallantly, but she was, in the words of the Prime Minister, prostrate. All was lost save honor. Poland has preserved her honor and has won the passionate sympathy of this country and, indeed, of mankind. There lies her guarantee for the future as a nation. The fact that Russia is advancing in the South and taking up positions which cover the whole frontier between Rumania and Poland, the fact that she is using for the purpose upwards of 100 divisions — rather a large quantity of troops if all they were to be employed upon was to clean up the remnants of the Polish forces — all these facts must be rather ominous from the standpoint of the ge-

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However the forces of the world may be aligned in the immediate future, the spirit of those who stand unflinchingly for freedom will be victorious.

Therefore I say, do not let base passions get the better of steady judgment.

Do not let hatred obscure our minds and deflect us for one moment from the greatest task in history of mankind — the final downfall of overlordism, dictatorship and tyranny. It may be that in the ebb and flow of war Poland will for a time be wiped off the map of Europe, but there will be a glorious resurrection.

Labor says to the Poles, therefore, bitter and tragic though your struggle may be, we will not desert you. We cannot desert the basic principle of our Movement without being traitors to ourselves.

We shall never be guilty of treachery. Loyalty to a cause is in every fibre of our being. Our message of hope to Poland is that in the days to come she will stand as an imperishable monument to steadfastness and faith in freedom when dictatorships have been swept from the face of the earth.

With Poland's rise from the ashes of the war in full-fledged freedom there will also come freedom for other peoples now dwelling in the dark shadows of cruelty and oppression.

neral staff of the German Army.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.): I want to express the opinion that the events of the past few weeks, and especially the events of Sunday, have completely and finally demonstrated the utter bankruptcy of the policy of this Government. Austria, Spain and Czechoslovakia were sacrificed in the hope of turning Hitler from the west and against the Soviet Union. That policy has been consistently pursued by the Prime Minister and the Government; it has now recoiled upon them, and the people of this country will have to pay for that in blood and tears. For six months of this year negotiations were dragged on with the Soviet Union, which was prepared all the time to place its mighty forces along with those of France and Britain for the building up of a peace front.

MR. WRAGG: It never was.

MR. GALLACHER: Certain things have been said about Russia but —

MR. WRAGG: Nothing to what Hitler said about them.

MR. GALLACHER: In the middle of August, when Hitler had 1,500,000 men marshalled on the Polish frontier and when Danzig was under the control of Hitler, a military mission was sent from this country to Moscow.\* That mission had no power to decide on any question except one, that Russian aid could not be accepted for Poland.

MR. WRAGG: It never negotiated with Stalin.

MR. GALLACHER: From the beginning it was made clear that Russian aid would not be accepted for Poland. Even at that time, when all those forces were gathered on the frontier and when the Fascist campaign of lies was at full swing against Poland, Russian aid was rejected. That was an invitation to Hitler to attack Poland. Hon. Members must understand that there was no possibility of defending Poland without the Russian army. When the aid of the Russian army was refused, the only conclusion that could be drawn was that there was no intention of defending Poland, that preparations were being made for another sell-out. Right up to Saturday, September

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\* See No. 41.

2, there was the possibility of another sell-out. Not only did this country do nothing to defend Poland, but Poland itself was not organized for defense. No one can but pay tribute to the splendid heroism of the Polish people in resisting the overwhelming forces of Fascist aggression, but where are the Polish Government and the Polish High Command? It was not on Sunday that they departed. Let anyone read an article in the "Times" of Monday, from a special correspondent. It is a very long article, and I do not want to read it to the House. There was no reference in it to what happened on Sunday: obviously it was written before Sunday, and it describes in the most striking fashion the complete demoralization in Poland and the complete breakdown of every form of organization. On Tuesday there was another article, which said:

"Moreover the state of popular feeling has changed out of all recognition during the past week. Travellers who have crossed the country during last week report that again and again they have passed motor cars and taxi-cabs carrying officers evacuating their families and transporting their luggage. That is indication enough of the deplorable lengths to which demoralization of the army has gone."

That is the condition that existed. There was complete disorganization and demoralization, with the Government of Poland jumping into Rumania, with the German armies travelling rapidly north, east and south-east. What is expected of the great Socialist State? Are they just to stand behind their borders and see all these millions of Russians and these masses of Jewish people coming under the domination of the Nazis, and to see the Nazis coming right up to the Russian frontier? We heard in this House from a previous Prime Minister that our frontier was the Rhine. What would any statesman or military expert suggest when a well-organized, powerful military machine was coming through a country in which there was no organization or Government?

MR. LOGAN (Lab.): The hon. Member pays a tribute to the gallantry of the Poles, and then he speaks of the wonderful

Russian Empire. Would one not think that instead of going into the country of the Poles and speaking of high morality, the Russians would go in and defend Poland?

MR. GALLACHER: Will the hon. Member not remember that the one thing for which this Government, together with the French Government and the Polish Government, were responsible was the prevention of that very thing. Their action in preventing the only possible hope for Poland was the invitation for Hitler to march. When these great Fascist armies are coming down upon them, is the Socialist country — I do not speak of the Russian Empire, for there is no Russian Empire — to do nothing on behalf of these millions of Russians and these Jews? The Soviet troops have come in and have drawn a line across Poland beyond which the German troops dare not, must not, pass. They have drawn a line across the Rumanian frontier, beyond which the Germans may not go.

MR. LOGAN: Why do they not fight the Germans instead of taking the spoils?

MR. GALLACHER: The hon. Member for East Aberdeen (Mr. Boothby) referred to an Italian broadcast and what was said about the Soviet armies. The Soviet armies have brought peace and security to the Polish people in the territories that they have occupied. Those people are the only section of the Polish people who have peace and security. Others have none. They have no support from this country. Let those who promised support to Poland but completely failed to give any, answer to this country for the fate of Poland. Listen to what was said by William Forrest in this morning's "News Chronicle." Dealing with the occupation of the eastern frontier, he says:

"Not a shot has been fired, not a bomb dropped, and villagers and townspeople freed from the terror of the air are hailing the Red Army as deliverers. Russian troops themselves are contributing to this feeling of relief by telling the people that they have come as friends and comrades. Many inhabitants in this part of Poland are Jews, whose number has been swelled by thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing before the German advance.

Their joy at finding themselves saved from the fate that awaited them at Nazi hands can well be imagined."

Forrest goes on to say that thousands who were fleeing into Rumania as refugees are now seeking to get back to that part of Poland, where they know they will be secure. A year ago in this House, when the Prime Minister was going to Munich, I declared that that represented the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, and that the day would come when the Government would have to answer for their policy. That day has come. This Government, who have contributed so much to the rise of Hitler and Fascism, are utterly incapable of extricating us from the situation which confronts us. We do not want a Government that will sell us out, but do not want a Government that will sacrifice millions of the youth of this country for any imperialist aims. We want a Government that is for a lasting peace in Europe through co-operation with the German people and the people of the Soviet Union. Such a Government must come from this side of the House, with all that is best from other parts of the House around it. We who have lived the best part of our lives will be committing a terrible crime if we sacrifice the young manhood of this country in a needless and senseless war.

A Government which has been responsible for so much ghastly blundering in the past is not capable of dealing with the situation which now confronts us. We cannot allow ourselves to commit that crime against the youth of the country. Therefore, we have to set ourselves to the task of getting a Government that can make the widest appeal to the people of Germany and the people of Europe as a whole. It must be a Government that has the trust and confidence of the people of this country and can secure the trust and the confidence of the people of Europe. It must be a Government which can state in plain and simple terms that for which we are fighting; a Government which will make it clear that its one desire is peace of a lasting and satisfactory character. We must get a Government of that kind; this Government will never serve that purpose. I say in this House that there is not a more discredited man in this country than the Prime Minister. The

Government that he represents has got to go, and a new Government, representing the best and most progressive desires of the people of this country, must take its place. Only then can we see the possibility of an end to the dread and horror that threaten the people of Britain and of Europe.

MR. PRICE (Lab.) : The Prime Minister's statement was restrained in circumstances which would, in a sense, have justified more forcible speaking. This applies particularly to one point on which I am glad the right hon. Gentleman spoke in measured terms. I think we all feel bitter about the action taken by Russia at the week-end. That enigma of the East has returned to its old policy of neutrality, coupled with a desire to profit by dissensions and wars in other parts of Europe. That was the policy of the leaders of the Russian revolution in its early stages and all that has happened now is that Russia has gone back to that policy. We must all regret with great bitterness that Litvinoff's struggle — when he was powerful and had influence in Geneva and elsewhere — for an indivisible peace, is now a thing of the past. That was one period of Russia's foreign policy — from her entry into the League of Nations up to the tragic event of the signature of the Russo-German Treaty a month ago. Russia now goes back to her old policy. We are, perhaps, paying for our past neglect of Russia and for failing to recognize her as a great Power, because no matter who may be her leaders, she is and always must be a great Power.

However this is no time for recrimination among ourselves, or, for that matter, towards Russia. Let us bury the past. This is a time for action. Whatever we may feel about what has happened in Eastern Europe in the last few days, I maintain that the real motive behind Russia's action has not yet been fully disclosed. We may surmise with some justification that Russia is anxious to prevent new Powers from appearing on the Black Sea. That has been her historic policy since the time of Peter the Great. Russia has no interest in seeing the German Drang nach Osten going down the shores

of the Black Sea. We still have a community of interest with her in that matter. We must also remember that Russo-German treaties, of which there have been a good many in the past, have not been long-lived but have generally been short-lived. That is a reflection which may afford us some comfort. Nor should we forget that the Russian word for a German means "a person whom I do not understand," which shows in the roots of Russian history there is a certain latent hostility between the two races. It is not altogether wishful thinking to say now that all may not be plain sailing for the Fuehrer in Eastern Europe.

In this conflict one of our aims must be to prevent German expansion in the East. When Czechoslovakia fell a year ago I thought that by maintaining good relations with Russia and by upholding Poland we might still prevent the Drang nach Osten from extending beyond the line from the Vistula to the Lower Danube, but alas, that line has now gone. Still it is not impossible that a line may be drawn from the Dvina and the Bug down to the Black Sea and the Dardanelles. If it be true that Russia is holding the Northern section of that line, Turkey is holding the Southern section and this brings me to the point of our relations with Turkey. It is in this connection that our relations with Turkey become of great importance. We must ask ourselves, what can we do to maintain and strengthen our relations with the Turkish Republic, and to prevent that country from falling, economically, under the influence and control of Germany.

MR. MC ENTÉE (Lab.): I want to raise a matter concerned not so much with the war abroad as with the effects of the war at home, but I would like to say before that that I listened with some interest, if not in sympathy, to the speech that was made by the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) — and, I think, Moscow. I was one of those, like many others in the House, who believed that if it were possible to make an alliance with Russia, such an alliance would have the effect of strengthening democracy in the world, and all the speakers at that time who took that point of view and all the literature issued by the Communist party at that time led us to believe that Rus-

sia, at any rate, could always be relied on to be on the side of democracy. I had some doubt about the democracy of Russia then; I have no doubt about it now. Whatever may be said about Russia at that time, whatever may have happened in Russia or with Russia at that time, it is perfectly clear now that Russia has joined with Hitler in an attempt to smash democracy. That is crystal clear. I think it is equally clear — at any rate, it appears so to me — that had it not been for the pact between Russia and Germany, had Russia stood aloof from that pact, it is very doubtful whether Germany would ever have taken the step that she did take of sending troops into Poland. . .

#### 54. DEFENSE OF WARSAW A GREAT HELP TO THE ALLIES. SOVIET INVASION (SEPTEMBER 22, 1939)\*

THE FIRST GERMAN motorized detachments arrived at the suburbs of Warsaw on September 8. After three weeks of battle and furious bombing, Warsaw, without water, light, food and ammunition was forced to capitulate. German troops occupied Warsaw on September 29, 1939. On September 19, 1939 the following message was sent from the people of Great Britain to the people of Warsaw:

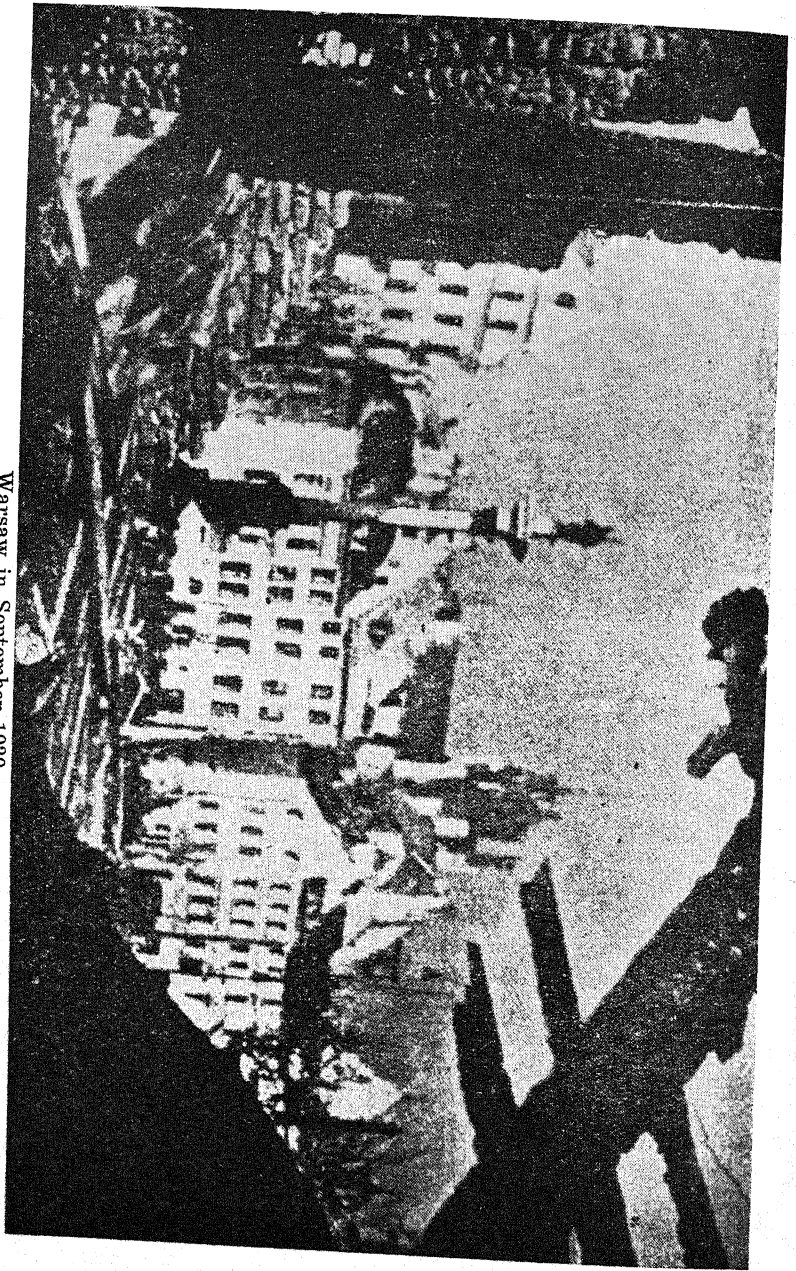
*"The entire world admires your courage. Poland once again became a victim of aggression by her neighbors. Through her heroic struggle against the aggressor she once again became the standard-bearer of Europe's freedom. We, your allies, shall continue the war to restore your liberty."*

MR. VYVYAN ADAMS (C.): . . . Again, I would like, if it were possible, although I admit that it is somewhat unprecedented, for His Majesty's Government to state in the most explicit terms that their policy is in no way to be taken as ex-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 1273-1275.





Warsaw in September 1939

pressed in the columns of the "Times". Even in the last week before the war actually came upon us, the somewhat unsuccessful policy of appeasement was audible in that most dangerously respectable of pamphlets. Since hostilities actually began this organ, which is so often treated abroad — and I am thinking particularly of neutral countries — as the official voice of the Government, has seemed from time to time to be on the verge of madness, to be, to quote Sir Nevile Henderson, "aping Herr Hitler at his worst." Here are two sentences printed yesterday from their special correspondent on the Lithuanian border:

"Messages from Warsaw in the last few days show that the spirit of the towns-people, though depressed by the destruction and carnage around them, are as undaunted as those of the military defenders."

That is not my English. He goes on:

"Apparently the full extent of Poland's calamity is not yet realized by the rank and file of soldiers and civilians inside the beleaguered city, and the hope appears to be strong there that the defense of Warsaw may turn the fortunes of war in favor of Poland."

That is a fine sentence, with its defeatist implications, for the German propagandist, whom we hear every night after midnight, to sieve and to wireless to the devoted defenders of our Ally's capital. It is as though the "Times" really cannot see the strategic value to ourselves of the valor of the Poles. Every day that the fall of Warsaw is delayed makes our preparations for a stroke on the West, or raids upon military objectives in the Reich, or our propaganda flights over Germany, so much easier and more effective. Not only should we salute the Poles for their courage, but we should thank them with a full heart for every hour they can give us to gather our strength for the blows of retribution.

Russia's invasion of Poland is morally inexcusable. Its methods are unheard of. But its motive even today — it is more than a week since it was begun — remains incalculable. When this news came through the "Times" seemed to go mad. They seemed bent on involving us in a war against Russia as well as

against Germany. If Russia needed an excuse to feed German stomachs and fill the tanks of German aircraft, she could have found it in that leading article of the "Times." It did not seem to have occurred to this paper that Russia may indeed have been engaged in roping Germany off from the Ukraine and the Balkans. We shall not lose the war, but that will not be the fault of the "Times". I trust that His Majesty's Government will find some means of publicly disassociating themselves from this particularly short-sighted newspaper. We should never forget, even today when we are united on our immediate purpose, that the plot ceding the Sudetenland, the act which opened the door to Prague, was apparently hatched in Printing House Square.

I am glad that Lord Halifax has at last seen the Russian Ambassador. Contacts, however stormy, are better than no contacts at all. I venture to think that we did not always do our best to get Russia. She may never have intended to co-operate, but I shall always believe that the prospects of an agreement with Russia would have been better if in the spring we had sent to Moscow Lord Halifax, or the present First Lord of the Admiralty, or the Dominions Secretary. I will be optimistic to this extent, and say that he would be a foolish man who said today that it was too late to repair some of the harm that was done by the earlier policy of qualified indifference. Of one thing we may be certain; it is that Russia's advance into Poland is not a move which will bring any satisfaction to our enemy.

Many of us have felt ashamed that we have been able to do very little to prevent the terrible suffering through which Poland has passed in these early stages. Some of us hope that we may be allowed to serve in the forces to do what little we can to repair the wrongs suffered not only by Poland, but by Czechoslovakia as well. That, I suggest, is the least we owe to Dr. Benes, who, more than any other single man, gave Europe an extra year's peace. While I am waiting to find some kind of useful service — and I expect hon. Members agree with me — I feel as futile as the man who, when asked why he did not go to help save civilization, said, "I am part of the civilization they are out to save." It would give some of us who

hope to be allowed to go a greater sense of confidence if we knew that the Government included rather more men who had been consistently right in matters of foreign policy, and rather fewer of those who have so frequently been wrong.

The Government cannot emphasize too clearly our plea that we are not fighting for revenge on the ox-like, stupid, stereotyped and extremely unattractive German people. We are pledged to the final destruction of the evil men — Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering, Goebbels and the rest who have deceived so disastrously many of our fellow countrymen by posturing as the protagonists against Bolshevism. May I suggest that we should be resolute for peace, but resolute for a victorious peace, a peace, indeed, which gives to the Rule of Law a chance of life.

## 55. DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN THE GERMAN AND SOVIET MILITARY ZONES (SEPTEMBER 26, 1939) \*

ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1939 the following communiqué was issued:

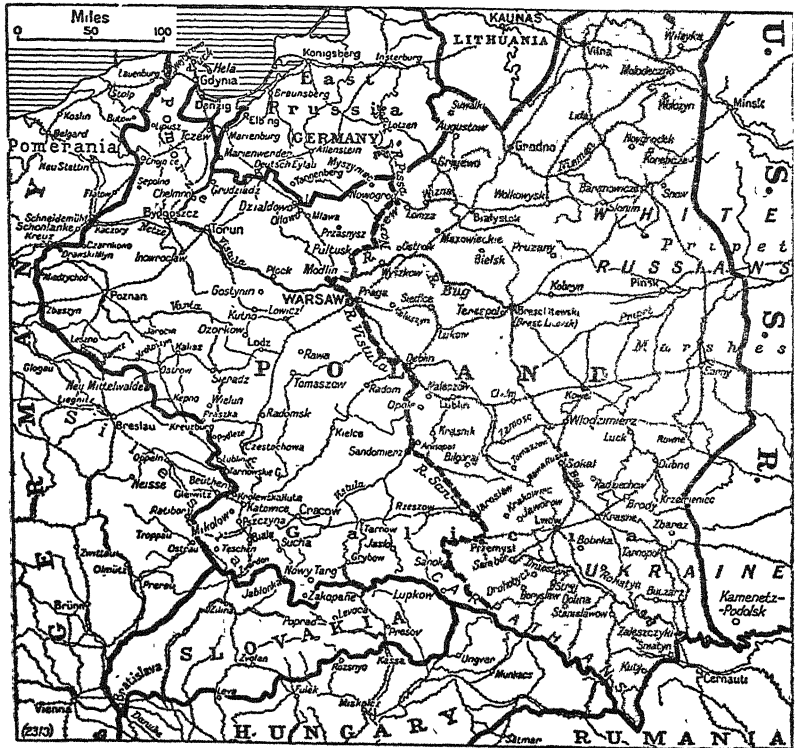
*"The German Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have established a demarcation line between the Soviet and the German armies along the course of the river Pissa to its confluence with the river Narew; further the river Narew to its confluence with the river Bug; then the river Bug to its confluence with the river Vistula."*

*The demarcation line was drawn further along the river Vistula to its confluence with the river San, then along the river San to the Carpathian Mountains.*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 1233-1234.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): . . . Since my last statement on September 20\* the effects of the action of the Soviet Government on the position in Poland have become clearer. The Soviet forces have everywhere rapidly advanced and on September 23 a German-Soviet communiqué was pub-



THE PRICE OF RUSSIAN CO-OPERATION ON THE EASTERN FRONT: A MAP SHOWING THE LINES OF DEMARCATION BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND GERMAN ARMIES, THE SOVIET HAVING EXACTED THE GALICIAN OIL WELLS. ("The Times.")

lished in Moscow, according to which the German and Soviet Governments had established a demarcation line between the German and Soviet armies running roughly North and South

\* See No. 53.

from East Prussia through Warsaw to the junction of the Hungarian and Slovak frontiers. It will be noticed that this line brings the Soviet forces up to the suburbs of Warsaw and leaves the greater part of Galicia and of the Polish oil wells in Soviet control. The communiqués recently issued by the Red Army do not, however, suggest that the Soviet troops have as yet occupied all the territory allotted to them under this arrangement, which amounts to more than half the total area of the Polish Republic. In these circumstances, the Polish armies, taken in rear as well as in front, have naturally been unable to maintain their ground. The Polish people have not, however, given up the struggle and the whole world is deeply moved by the magnificent heroism of the defenders of Warsaw and the Hel peninsula, who are still holding out against the surrounding German forces in spite of ruthless and continuous bombardment.

In my statement on September 20, I made a brief reference to the problems with which the Rumanian Government had been confronted by the passage of Polish troops and civilians into Rumanian territory. His Majesty's Government were watching with sympathy the efforts of the Rumanian Government to meet these problems, when they learned of the cowardly assassination of M. Calinescu, the Rumanian President of the Council, on September 21. His Majesty's Minister at Bucharest was at once instructed to convey to the Rumanian Government an expression of the horror of His Majesty's Government and of the British people at this outrage and their sincere and heartfelt condolence in the great loss which Rumania had thereby suffered.

## 56. BOMBING OF OPEN TOWNS (OCTOBER 2, 1939)\*

**C**OLONEL WEDGWOOD (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will obtain reports from His Majesty's Minister late in Warsaw, and from our Consuls late in Katowice and Krakow as to the actual results of air-raid bombings upon life and property, including the approximate number of days when bombing took place, and the number of bombs dropped.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : Hon. Members will have realized from previous answers given the extent of damage to life and property caused by the bombing of open towns in Poland. Having regard to the conditions under which our diplomatic and consular officials were obliged to carry out their duties and the extent of the war area, it would be impossible to obtain detailed statements at this distance of space and time.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD: Would it not be of great value if we could find out the actual effect of German bombing during one raid on Warsaw so that we might have some idea of what it would be here? As we have had a Minister in Warsaw a report from him would be particularly valuable at the present time.

MR. BUTLER: The right hon. and gallant Gentleman may rest assured that our officers of every kind are obtaining all the information they are able to get and that we are examining the information. I am sure that anybody coming here will receive the reception they deserve.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD: May I ask where the Government got the fantastic idea of the number of casualties which would be caused in an air raid on London?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 1653-1654. See also Nos. 50, 51, 52.  
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57. SOVIET-GERMAN AGREEMENT TO  
PARTITION POLAND  
(OCTOBER 3, 1939)\*

ON SEPTEMBER 18, 1939 the following joint German-Soviet communiqué concerning military cooperation on Polish territory was issued:

*"In order to avoid all kinds of unfounded rumors concerning the respective aims of the Soviet and German armies operating in Poland the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government declare that the operations of these armies do not involve any aim contrary to the interests of Germany and of the U.S.S.R. or to the spirit and the letter of the German-Russian pact of non-aggression. On the contrary, the aim of these armies is to restore peace and order destroyed by the collapse of the Polish State and to help the Polish population to reconstruct the conditions of their political existence."*

*On September 22, 1939 a German-Soviet communiqué was published about the demarcation line between the German and Soviet military zones. (See No. 55).*

*On September 26, 1939, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow and on September 28 the Soviet-German Agreement concerning the fourth partition of Poland\* was signed. Following is the text of this agreement:*

*"The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government, following the collapse of the former Polish State, consider it as exclusively their own task to restore peace and order in these territories and to assure to the people*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 351, p. 1855-1912.

\*\* Partitions of Poland: first, 1772; second, 1793; third, 1795.



*inhabiting them a peaceful existence which will correspond to their national characteristics. With this object in view, they have concluded the following Agreement:*

*Article 1*

*The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government establish, as the frontier between their respective State interests in the territory of the former Polish State, a line which is marked on the attached map and which will be given in more detail in a supplementary Protocol.*

*Article 2*

*Both countries recognize as final the frontier between their respective State interests as set out in Article 1, and will resist any interferences with this decision on the part of other Powers.*

*Article 3*

*The German Government will carry out the necessary State reconstruction on the territory west of the line indicated in Article 1, and the Soviet Government on the territory east of this line.*

*Article 4*

*The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government regard the above-mentioned reconstruction as a reliable foundation for the future development of friendly relations between their peoples.*

*Article 5*

*This agreement is subject to ratification. The exchange of instruments of ratification is to take place as soon as possible in Berlin.*

*The agreement enters into force from the moment of its signature.*

*Molotov                      Ribbentrop.”\**

*On the same day (September 28) the following declaration of the Soviet and German Governments was issued:*

*“The German Government and the Government of the U.S.S.R., by the treaty signed today, having finally settled*

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*For secret protocol see p. 486*

*questions that arose as a result of the dissolution of the Polish State, and having thereby created a firm foundation for a lasting peace in Eastern Europe, in mutual agreement express the opinion that the liquidation of the present war between Germany on the one hand and Great Britain on the other is in the interest of all nations.*

*Therefore both Governments will direct their common efforts, if necessary in accord with other friendly Powers, in order to attain this aim as early as possible.*

*If, however, these efforts of both Governments remain futile, it will be established thereby that Great Britain and France bear the responsibility for the continuation of the war and in the event of the continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and the U.S.S.R. will consult each other on the necessary measures.*

*Also on the same day (September 28) the following letter was addressed by Molotov to Ribbentrop:*

*"Herr Reichminister, — Referring to our conversations we have the honor to confirm to you that, on the basis and in the spirit of the general political agreement reached by us, the Government of the U.S.S.R. is filled with the desire to do everything to develop economic relations and trade turnover between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.*

*With this aim in view both parties will draw up an economic program in accordance with which the Soviet Union will supply Germany with raw materials which Germany will, in her turn, compensate by deliveries of industrial goods to be effected in the course of a lengthy protocol.*

*Both countries will draft this economic program in such a way that the volume of the German-Soviet trade turnover should again reach the highest level attained in the past.\**

*Both Governments will immediately issue the necessary restrictions for the realization of the above mea-*

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\* Over 1,000,000,000 marks in the year 1931.

*asures, and will see to it that negotiations should be begun and brought to a conclusion as soon as possible."*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): In the last week events of great importance have occurred in the international field. On September 26 the German Foreign Minister paid a visit to Moscow, and on September 28 the results of this visit were proclaimed. These results were threefold. In the first place, a fourth partition of Poland has been attempted, and an agreement has been signed recognizing as final the frontier between Russia and Germany. The line agreed upon was considerably more favorable to Germany than the provisional line of military occupation which had previously been laid down.\*

In the second place, the German and Soviet Governments have declared that their agreement has finally settled the questions arising out of the collapse of the Polish State and has created a solid foundation for lasting peace in Eastern Europe. In their opinion, the liquidation of the present war between Germany and England and France would be in the interests of all nations. Both Governments, they go on to say, will endeavor to achieve this object as quickly as possible. They assert that, should their efforts prove unsuccessful, England and France will bear the responsibility for the continuation of the war and they add that the German and Soviet Governments will then consult together as to the measures they will take.

In the third place, an economic agreement between Germany and Russia is foreshadowed, under which Russia will supply raw materials to Germany and Germany will supply industrial goods produced over a lengthy period.

There has been in some quarters a demand that His Majesty's Government should define their attitude in the face of these developments, but I see nothing in what has happened that should lead this country to modify the attitude which it has felt it right to take.

The agreement between Germany and Russia and the subsequent partition of Poland between them has, of course, chan-

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\* See No. 55.

ged the position in Poland, but it by no means follows that the arrangement will endure to the ultimate advantage of Germany, and still less should it affect the aims of His Majesty's Government. There is nothing in that agreement that should cause us to do anything other than what we are doing now — mobilizing all the resources and all the might of the British Empire for the effective prosecution of the war.

The reason for which this country entered the war has been frequently proclaimed. It was to put an end to the successive acts of German aggression which menaced the freedom and the very security of all the nations of Europe.

The immediate cause of the war was the deliberate invasion of Poland by Germany, the latest, but by no means the only, act of aggression planned and carried through by the German Government.

But if Poland was the direct occasion of war, it was not the fundamental cause. That cause was the overwhelming sense in this country and in France of the intolerable nature of a state of affairs in which the nations of Europe were faced with the alternative of jeopardizing their freedom or of mobilizing their forces at regular intervals to defend it.

The passage in the Russo-German declaration about the liquidation of the war is obscure, but it seems to combine a suggestion of some proposal for peace with a scarcely veiled threat as to the consequences if the proposal should be refused.

I cannot anticipate what the nature of any such proposal might be. But I can say at once that no threat would ever induce this country or France to abandon the purpose for which we have entered upon this struggle.

To attempt — as German propaganda does — to saddle us with the responsibility for continuing the war because we are not prepared to abandon the struggle before this purpose is achieved, is only another instance of German war technique. The responsibility for the war rests upon those who have conceived and carried out this policy of successive aggression, and it can neither be evaded nor excused.

And I would add one thing more. No more assurances from the present German Government could be accepted by us.

For that Government have too often proved in the past that their undertakings are worthless when it suits them that they should be broken. If, therefore, proposals are made, we shall certainly examine them and we shall test them in the light of what I have just said. Nobody desires the war to continue for an unnecessary day, but the overwhelming mass of opinion in this country, and I am satisfied also in France, is determined to secure that the rule of violence shall cease, and that the word of Governments, once pledged, must henceforth be kept...

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) : I welcome the statement made by the Prime Minister with regard to the situation that has arisen through the forcible division of Poland between two great Powers. That fact does not really alter the situation which caused us to enter upon this war, and the fact that Poland has been overrun is not different from the fact that almost all Belgium was overrun in the last war or that Serbia was overrun. Belgium rose again: Poland will rise again. The spirit of the Polish people is not defeated. The Prime Minister is right, in my view, in saying that we must examine carefully every kind of proposal for peace, but we must deal with realities. It is no good saying that there is peace when there is no peace, and the mere reversion to a situation of the last year or so would not bring the world back to peace, because, in fact, this war began long before there was any formal declaration of war. We shall require deeds, and not merely words, before we can get any substantial basis for peace when we look at what has happened previously. I, therefore, welcome the Prime Minister's statement that this country and France stand where we are, because we are standing essentially for a real peace and not a sham peace, and for the safety of all peoples, and not merely considering only our own people. With that, as the Prime Minister said, every one of us would welcome any real possibility of ending this war, and no one would wish to prolong it any longer than is absolutely necessary...

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (Ind. L.) : I rise not so much to take part in the Debate as to ask one or two questions of the Prime Minister. At the beginning of his very interesting statement

the Prime Minister said that his difficulty with regard to even considering any proposals of peace which come from Herr Hitler himself is that he has very good reason for doubting his good faith. I quite sympathize with him in that respect; there is certainly every reason, and no one has greater reason than the Prime Minister himself. If the whole situation with regard to the question of peace were dependent upon the word of Herr Hitler I am afraid that we should have no alternative but to proceed until we got some other and better and more assured guarantee. What I want to put to the Prime Minister is this. It is clear that the statement issued last week, the combined statement of the Russian and German Governments with regard to the agreement they had arrived at, was only a provisional one. They were not putting forward any terms of peace. It was a proposal which we certainly should not contemplate. It was that we should accept as an accomplished fact the conquest of Poland and the absorption or assimilation of Poland and that we should base any terms of peace upon that assumption. We do not agree with that.

But it is quite clear from what appears in the Press — I get it from our own Press who have derived it from other sources, notably Italian sources and perhaps Russian sources — that there has been a discussion between the parties concerned, I mean Russia and Germany and Italy, of more detailed terms of Peace. There is a good deal that we do not know. We do not know, for instance, what is proposed to be done with Poland, and that is a very vital matter. I was very glad that the First Lord of the Admiralty in his powerful broadcast on Sunday night (October 1)\* did draw a distinction between the attitude

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\* WINSTON CHURCHILL'S ADDRESS BROADCAST ON  
OCTOBER 1, 1939

The British Empire and the French Republic have been at war with Nazi Germany for a month tonight. We have not yet come at all to the severity of fighting which is to be expected; but three important things have happened.

First, Poland, has been again overrun by two of the Great Powers which held her in bondage for 150 years, but were unable to quench the spirit of the Polish nation. The heroic defense of Warsaw shows that the soul of Poland is indestructible, and that she will rise again like a rock, which may for a spell be submerged by a tidal wave, but which remains a rock.

of the Russian Government and that of the German Government. I could give many reasons, but this is not the opportunity for doing so, for treating even the partition of Poland, in so far as the Russian part is concerned, in a totally different spirit from that part which appertains to Herr Hitler and the German Government. Whether the parts of Poland which they have annexed are truly Russian is a matter for discussion. Since the announcement that it was proposed that peace terms should be proffered there has been detailed discussion in Moscow between the German Government and Mr. Stalin. What happened we do not know. There have been discussions at the invitation of Herr Hitler with the Italian Government, and let me say that I do not think the Italian Government have shown any hostility towards this country during the last few days; on the whole they have shown a friendly disposition.

We do not know, therefore, what has really passed, but it is quite clear that somebody is going to submit, whether formally or by broadcast or otherwise, detailed terms for the con-

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What is the second event of this first month? It is of course, the assertion of the power of Russia. Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail. When Herr von Ribbentrop was summoned to Moscow last week, it was to learn the fact, and to accept the fact, that the Nazi designs upon the Baltic States and upon the Ukraine must come to a dead stop.

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or the safety of Russia that Germany should plant itself upon shores of the Black Sea, or that it should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of southeastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.

But in this quarter of the world — the southeast of Europe — these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France. None of these three Powers can afford to see Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and above all Turkey, put under the German heel. Through the fog of confusion and uncertainty we may discern quite plainly the community of interests to prevent the Nazi's carrying the flames of war into the Balkans and Turkey. Thus, my friends, at some risk of being proved wrong by events, I will proclaim tonight my conviction that the second great fact of the first month of the war is that Hitler, and all that Hitler stands for, have been and are being warned off the east and the southeast of Europe. . .

sideration of the Government. I think it is very important that we should not come to too hurried a conclusion. It needs very careful consideration. I agree with the Prime Minister entirely that if it depended on the statement of Herr Hitler that we should accept the conquest of Poland, as an accomplished fact and enter into peace on those terms we should be dishonored, but it is quite clear that you are going to get something which goes far beyond that. I have nothing upon which I can base this statement except what has appeared in the British Press. There are other questions which will have to be considered — not merely Poland. There is the question of Czechoslovakia, which in many ways is, I think, a better case, but at any rate, it is a question which has to be considered. Not a word has been said about that by Herr Hitler or any other Government. There is also the very important question of the Colonies, which I have no doubt will be raised, and where this House might express some general opinion for the instruction of the Government.

MR. DAVID GRENFELL (Lab.): I had not intended to say a word today, and I have had no consultation with any of my hon. Friends on this side, but when I listened to the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) a fellow-countryman whom I have admired all my life, I must say that I was exceedingly disturbed by the substance of what he said and by what I believe to be his gross error in timing the delivery of that speech. The Prime Minister has been accused for two or three years of pursuing a policy of conciliation and appeasement, and carrying his willingness to cooperate too far to satisfy the opinions of the majority of people in this House. I have never agreed with him personally, and I will repeat what I have said privately time and time again, that I believe the Prime Minister has been far too willing to compromise. The situation today is less manageable because of the extent to which we have given way to blackmail in the past. It is true that the situation has changed day by day since September 1, just over a month ago. The situation is still changing and it may change again tomorrow, but there is nobody in this House who will today confess that the determination of the House



was wrong or that the statement of the Prime Minister, repeated over and over again, was unworthy of the House or the country.

Twelve months ago the Prime Minister came back from Munich with far more satisfaction than I thought the circumstances warranted. I was disturbed very much by the extent of the settlement and the territorial changes in Middle Europe which then took place. All we then saw was that the bastions of defense for the smaller Danubian countries were being handed over to Germany. The justification for that was that the people who occupied the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia were German by race, and the principle of self-determination and the machinery of plebiscites were put forward to defend the change and the surrenders which took place in September last year. Since then there have been rapid, extensive and far-reaching changes on the Continent of Europe. On March 15, the Germans overran Bohemia and Moravia and added to the Reich, in the form of a Protectorate, a disguised form of slavery in which 10,000,000 non-Germans were added to the Reich. The principle of self-determination and the machinery of plebiscites were completely set aside in that transaction.

Now there has been the attack upon Poland and a new partition. In this partition 22,000,000 new subjects, the overwhelming majority of them unwilling to be transferred, have been added to the German Reich and taken over by force after bloodshed, after treason and after horrible barbarities upon the civilian population. The German Reich now contains 20,000,000 more non-Germans. In the last 12 months 30,000,000 non-German people have been torn from their own lives and added to the Nazi regime in Germany to be compelled, not only to forswear their nationality, but to accept Nazi ideas in the government of the people and of the individual. This is not the end. Perhaps next month, when every day smaller countries are being coerced and compelled one by one —

COMMANDER SIR ARCHIBALD SOUTHEY (C.) : By Russia.

MR. GRENFELL: I know what Russia has done. It has been a most despicable act. We say in this country that kicking a man when he is down is the act of a coward. Russia stepped in

and kicked Poland when she was prostrate and shook hands with the aggressor. There is no word for it. I do not know what Russia proposes to do in the future, but I am sure it does not reduce the crime against Poland by one iota because there have been two aggressors instead of one. Poland was a nation of people struggling to revive their national life after a century and a half of disorganization and after the repudiation of all claims to nationality. My right hon. Friend made this speech today but he has written articles denouncing the Poles, condemning and reviling the victim and not the aggressor. I do not speak with authority, except the authority of a conscience which I have kept as clear as I can all my life. I speak here in the presence of my fellow-Members and of the public who listen to our words and report them, and I say that I am a man who would give my life to see Europe freed from the menace of war and tyranny.

MR. STEPHEN (I.L.P.): Will the hon. Member allow me?

HON. MEMBERS: Sit down.

MR. GRENFELL: I would give my life and I am willing —

MR. STEPHEN: You are afraid to give way.

MR. GRENFELL: I am afraid of nothing in life. I may be guilty of shortcomings, but not of fear, and I speak here with the confidence that I shall not be misunderstood. I should like to see peace this minute in Europe. Who wants to go on? (Hon. Members: "Hear, hear.") Yes, but there are conditions of peace — thoughts of peace and desires for peace. I shall not try to pronounce or to picture the details of any possible offer that may come, but I would say today, or tomorrow, or for another year, or two years or three years of struggle in a cause which I believe to be just, that the conditions for the resumption of friendly contacts in Europe are the conditions which previously existed. I would sum it up in one phrase — Europe ought to be willing, ought to be ready, to discuss peace when we have gone back at least as far as the status quo ante-Munich, when the Czechs are to be masters in their own country, and when the Poles are to regain their national rights — when that has been done and the Germans are back in Germany and the Russians are back in Russia. If they want peace why do

they not go back to their own country?

MR. STEPHEN: Do you want to declare war on Russia?

MR. GRENFELL: When that has been done I would talk about peace, and when I am talking about peace in Europe I am not merely talking about national boundaries and the exchange of political formulas. To build up a secure peace in Britain, whether it comes soon or whether it comes late, you must first provide the firm foundations of economic order and economic justice between the peoples of Europe.

MR. BUCHANAN (I.L.P.): In rising to speak for only a few minutes I want to say as clearly as I can that I speak only for myself and, in so far as I can, for the division which I represent. Like the hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Grenfell) one has to take one's responsibilities as seriously as one can, and I trust that those who disagree with the hon. Member for Gower and who hold views like mine are no less brave, no less honest and no less desirous of seeing the right thing done. I would also say that I congratulate the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George), an ex-Prime Minister, upon having the courage, at 76 years of age, to take a hostile line in this House of Commons. I say frankly that there are masses of people — at least large masses of people — who are thinking as he is thinking, and if we have a democratic House of Commons then, instead of his being abused, instead of taunts being flung across the Floor, surely at 76 he is to be congratulated on putting his point of view. [Interruption] Well, that is my view, and I hope I shall be allowed to put it.

I want to go a step further than he has gone. I take an even stronger line about peace than he has done. We hear in the House about the great mass of people who are behind the Government in this war. I am an ordinary man in this House. I try, as all Members try, to represent my division, and I meet my constituents week in and week out, and frankly I say to the Prime Minister that I cannot find this great unanimous desire for the war. Frankly speaking, I find the reverse. And I want to say this, that in 1914 I never saw anything like the hostility to the war that I find today. [Interruption] Each man for himself. I say to some of the hon. Members who interrupt that

I often wish I could get a secret referendum taken in this country for or against the war. I tell those who are shouting loud about the war today that I have no hesitation in saying the result would shock them. Men everywhere are saying, "You went to war for Poland — to defend Poland, to help Poland." On the Saturday night on the eve of the war the Prime Minister was abused by nearly everybody in the House and could not get a decent show. You talk about democracy — democracy at its worst. That Saturday night Members shouted "What about the poor Poles? They are being killed." I ask, "What about them now, at the end of a month?" They are gone.

I came back from Poland in the last ship to leave Gdynia. What did the poor Poles think? I do not say, "What did their leaders think?" because I never met their leaders, but I met the dockers, the workers on the boats, those who sail the ships and the agricultural workers. They thought they were going to fight for the Poles by much more definite methods than turned out to be the case. They thought they had the great British Empire fighting for them, and I am going to say this to the Prime Minister, that if he and this Government had ever told the Poles that all they were going to do was all they have done the Poles would never have entered the war. The simple people walking in the streets of Gdynia thought the British Empire was behind them in a sense which they have not yet seen — and Poland has gone.

SIR H. CROFT (C.) : Does the hon. Member understand their language?

MR. BUCHANAN : Well, I understood them through the British there who interpreted. That was all I could do. I met them and spent days with them in steamships. That is all I could do. I am not a linguist and I have not stated that I am. I apologize for my education. Blame my father for it; he is responsible.

What are we in now? When we entered this war we guaranteed Poland against aggression. Was it against German aggression or any other aggression? Here is Russia today, taking half of Poland. They may be different, but they have taken half of Poland. If I understood the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Gower (Mr. D. Grenfell) properly, he says

that they are just as bad as the Germans. What does that mean? It means that after you have fought Germany and restored that part of Poland you have to start and fight Russia to get back that part also.

MR. GRENFELL: My hon. Friend cannot have heard the explanation that the Russians are in Poland to prevent the Germans from having it. If the Germans go out, will not the Russians go out too?

MR. BUCHANAN: My hon. Friend said that the Russians were as bad as the Germans. I thought from his speech that he meant that they were even worse, but I will say that they are as bad. Now my hon. Friend is going to say that these people, who are as bad, are going to be different from the people whom they equal in badness. He has said that the Russians will walk out of Poland. Did you ever see any country, did you ever see us, walking out of any colony, after we got it?

MR. GALLACHER (Com.): The First Lord of the Admiralty in his broadcast speech the other night said that Russia was pursuing a "cold policy of self-interest." What does that mean in actual life? A "cold policy of self-interest" means a warm-blooded policy of the advance of Socialism, because the Soviet Union has no other aim than that of advancing Socialism. It came into Poland after the Polish Government, and the whole organization of the Polish Government, had collapsed. It has relieved the Polish workers and peasants from the control of the feudal barons of Poland. I cannot understand any suggestion coming from a Socialist that part of Poland should be handed back to the feudal barons. It will not be a question of having to fight Russia, but of having to fight these peasants and workers to try and force them under the subjection of the feudal barons once again. But that by the way.

There has frequently been expressed a desire in the House that we should endeavor to get Germany and Russia involved in war so that we could sit back and look at them destroying one another. The Prime Minister has continually worked for one aim, a Four-Power Pact. When he was asked by the Leader of the Labor or Liberal Opposition, "Why do you not

bring in Russia?" or "Why do you not deal with Eastern Europe?" he generally replied, "Let us get a settlement in the West, and then we will deal with the East." When the four Powers were gathered at Munich, he thought he had achieved his aim. The Prime Minister said he wanted a settlement in the West and then he would settle the East, but instead of the Prime Minister's policy succeeding, the Soviet Union has made a settlement in the East and now proposes to assist in a settlement in the West. This represents the absolute and complete bankruptcy of the Prime Minister's Policy. The Soviet Union is now the dominant force in Europe, and not Nazi Germany. It is a great Socialist country. No one in this House can deny that if there were a Socialist Government in Germany, we would not be facing a situation like this, and if we had a Socialist Government in this country and in France the situation would soon be settled without sacrificing young lives. But we have an Imperialist Government ready to conduct a war of extermination with Germany. The people of this country will never stand for it, let hon. Members say what they will. The Government will have to answer for the first massacre of youth that takes place. The Soviet Union makes a difference —

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.) : That is a new story.

MR. GALLACHER: It is not a new story. I am prepared to take any speech that I have made and I defy anybody to say that I have not advocated unity in order to preserve peace. Before the war, I was advocating unity of the forces that would obtain peace. As soon as war commenced it became the responsibility of us all not to talk about a three years' war or a war to an end, but how we could bring about peace at the earliest moment. The maddest thing imaginable is to talk about a three years' war and a war to the end. We can easily have a war of extermination of the whole youth of this country and of Germany, but if we want peace we should take the first opportunity that comes for making peace. What is the new factor in any proposals that may come from Hitler or from anyone else? — that you will not only have Britain and France signing some document which Hitler may prepare, but you have the mightiest Power in Europe and as a result an oppor-

tunity to obtain the combination that can give the absolute guarantee for a lasting peace in Europe.

Anyone who understands the situation in Germany realizes that Hitler never had a basis in the working-class movement. It may be that during the past years, because of some of the things he has done, he has obtained a measure of support from certain sections of the working class, but he has never had a basis in the working-class movement. He drew the Stormtroopers from other classes and never from the working class. His finances came from the big monopoly capitalists of Germany. But that was not enough. Hitler could only be maintained and advanced by the support of the big bourgeoisie of the rest of Europe and specially of Britain and France. With the developments that have taken place, all that support has been wiped away and so Hitler and his Nazis, still supported by the monopoly capitalists of Germany, have lost support of great importance for them, support from the bourgeoisie of Europe. I remember how hon. Members were delighted when Hitler talked about the Bolshevist swine, the Jewish Bolsheviks, and how an hon. Member on the other side became a sort of sewer drainage of the filth that came out of Germany. They said, "Let Hitler have armaments; the stronger he is the sooner will we be able to attack the Soviet Union." That was too big a job and Hitler knew it. The Soviet Union is now in a strong position and, as an hon. Member said, the dominant nation in Europe. The only comfort that can be offered to the German people, and the German mothers, by Rudolf Hess is the Soviet Union and not Hitler.

I remember sitting in a house just after war was declared, and the mother of the family was breaking her heart over it. One of her boys had been taken away from her, and he was not much more than a schoolboy. She was sitting there crying, and the others were doing their best to comfort her. The news bulletin was being broadcast on the radio and a cold, callous, heartless voice was saying, "The War Council has met and has taken measures for a war of three years or more." I have never seen such tragedy in the face of any human being as in the face of that mother. Do not let us talk about how long we

can make the war last. Do not let us say that the masses of the youth of this country and of Germany are to be sacrificed. If there is a proposal for a conference, never mind what the terms are, let us go into that conference, and see what terms we can make of it.

MR. MAGNAY (L. Nat.): What about the sacrifices of the poor people of Warsaw? Are they not to count?

MR. GALLACHER: They are terrible sacrifices, but why was it possible that such sacrifices should have been made? Why were pledges given which it was not possible to implement? When the poor people of Poland took to the barricades, when their soldiers marched out to slaughter, they expected aid. Let those who promised aid to Poland and gave no aid answer the question of the hon. Member. Let them answer not only to the people of Poland, but to the masses of the people of this country. Why should we not go into consultation — Britain, France, Germany and the Soviet Union? If it be possible to get out of a conference of those great Powers terms that would guarantee the peace of Europe, and terms that will, within the shortest possible time, mean a complete block for German aggression, we can settle in a favorable atmosphere the position not only of the Polish people but of the people of Czechoslovakia. When I speak of that settlement I speak of the Polish people and not of the Russian people who were taken over in the rape that was carried out by Pilsudski. Those lands and the industries in those territories are now in the possession of the workers of the Soviet Union, and must remain so. Hon. Members ought to pause before they do anything which will sacrifice the young lads of this country. As I said the other night, those of us who have lived the best part of our lives will commit a terrible crime against the youth of this country if we send them to their deaths, without doing everything humanly possible to find a way of escape.

MR. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear.

MR. GALLACHER: Surely, we are agreed on that.

MR. BUCHANAN: In view of that statement, I am wondering why the hon. Member did not vote against the Conscription Bill, which handed the workers over to the Government.



MR. GALLACHER: The hon. Member has raised that question and I will answer him. If he will read my speech he will see that I spoke against it.

MR. BUCHANAN: The hon. Member did not vote against it.

MR. GALLACHER: When the Motion for the introduction of the Bill was made, the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) said that he did not want to inconvenience the Government or the House, that he did not want to waste time, and that if he and his colleagues were allowed to have a vote on that Motion, they would not oppose the Bill.

MR. BUCHANAN: The vote was for or against conscription. The hon. Member did not vote against conscription. Will he tell me why?

MR. GALLACHER: I am trying to tell the hon. Member. If there had been a body of men opposing the Government, opposing conscription and willing to go to a Division, I should have gone along with them. The hon. Member for Bridgeton said, and I can quote it from the Official Report —

MR. BUCHANAN: You do not vote on what he said. You vote on the Question before the House.

MR. GALLACHER: The hon. Member for Bridgeton said that if they were allowed a vote on the Motion, they would not oppose the Bill, or words to that effect.

MR. MCGOVERN: No.

MR. GALLACHER: I guarantee it. The vote was given not for the purpose of opposing the Conscription Bill, but for the purpose of deceiving the workers outside. When the Bill came up for Second Reading, not one of the three hon. Members, the hon. Member for Bridgeton and his colleagues, was in his place. They had a vote on the Motion for the introduction of the Bill and not on the Bill itself. On that understanding, they did not oppose the Bill. I am not participating in trickery of that kind. The main question now before the House and the country, and especially before the masses of school lads — for they are little more than school lads — whose young lives are being affected, is to get, at the earliest possible moment, a peace that will be lasting and that will guarantee security. Nobody will object to that.

Why should any of us be afraid to meet the representatives of other nations and discuss the possibilities of peace? Of what are hon. Members afraid? Is it not because we have a Government which has been concerned all along with pursuing its own Imperialist policy first, and in trying to direct Germany against the Soviet Union? When that failed, they are prepared to sacrifice the masses of this country in order to continue their Imperialist aims. We ought at any time to be ready to discuss peace. We know what we want and we ought to go forward with the knowledge that if we discuss the question of a settled peace in Europe, we shall have with us the mighty force of the Soviet Union. I only wish that we could get, what all the people of this country desire, above everything else, the end of this Government. If only we could get rid of this Government and get a Socialist Government here and now, it could meet these other Governments, in combination with France and the Soviet Union, and guarantee peace and a new and better life for the people of this country.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.): I have listened to the Prime Minister's statement and to the proposal put forward by the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) and to the other speeches since. I listened with amusement to the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher). I could not take his speech seriously. His speeches change from week to week because his policy has to be settled from day to day, and we cannot accept his speeches as a serious expression of working-class thought in this country because the hon. Member takes his orders from a foreign Government. He has told us today that he is in favor of a conference. That is a great change within less than a month. The day after war was declared the "Daily Worker" told us how to win the war, and a week ago I was handed a pamphlet which was being sold in Glasgow under the name of Harry Pollitt, who is associated, I believe, with the hon. Member, indeed, I think he is his master, which told us how to win the war. I read the pamphlet coming from Glasgow to London and it contained proposals for winning the war against the Nazis of Germany. Last Saturday the

"Daily Worker" said that we must back the conference proposed by Stalin and Hitler. If the hon. Member for West Fife changes his policy and his words in such a short space of time in order to coincide with the expressions of Stalin and Hitler, he becomes in effect Hitler's mouthpiece in this country. Hitler desires peace at this moment. I desire peace. I desire that there should be no wars at all, but I am not going to be associated with the treacherous act which is to be imposed on this country.

What is more. If we go back to the various stages of the last few years those who have stood for peace have been attacked from every street corner. We were ridiculed when we stood for peace when Abyssinia was conquered. The hon. Member for West Fife went round the country and said we were pro-Fascist because we were against sanctions and against war. When Czechoslovakia was over-run we wanted peace, and we were called Chamberlain's allies and Hitler's allies. To-day Poland has been raped, and the hon. Member for West Fife wants peace; he wants Hitler to get away with the rape of Poland. Why? Because Stalin has seen fit to join Hitler in the merry game of grab that is going on in Central Europe. The hon. Member for West Fife talks about his speeches. He must remember that street-corner methods will not do in this House. He is able there to get loud-mouthed Communists around him and put over any story as long as it comes from Russia. But some of us in this House have memories. I do not propose to waste the time of the House but I have dug out a number of speeches of the hon. Member and they are full of venomous attacks on the Nazis and those associated with the Nazis. He wanted Ribbentrop cleared out of this country and he wanted the Prime Minister who associated with Ribbentrop to be cleared out. He wanted some houses in this country purged because they had harbored Ribbentrop and other Nazis. He is so pure that he would not breathe the same air as Ribbentrop and Hitler and his allies.

I was never taken in by those speeches. I remember the thousands marching down Whitehall on the Sunday when I came back from Germany after my cycle tour, and I heard the

insistent cry by young men of the Communist party "Stand by Czechoslovakia." That could not be done only by the tongue. If it could be done by the tongue then the Communists would have the first place in this country. But it had to be done with rifles, and bullets and machine guns, and bombs and all the paraphernalia of war. It must always be noted that the people who have been insistent on standing by Abyssinia and Czechoslovakia and other countries never intended to do any of the fighting themselves. Many of them are trained for the purposes of war because they deserted the Socialist movement in 1914 and joined the Army. They are trained men, but the fighting was always to be done by the simple trade unionists and people whom they would send to the front to fight for the great peace front. At that time we were told the simple story that if Russia joined with France and Britain — and we must remember that Russia has a pact with France, a military pact, although the "Daily Worker" last week said that "that wretch Blum has sold the pass in France" — the peace front would defend Poland and Rumania, and all these border States. This is the logic of the position to me. If Stalin joining Britain and France would ensure peace then Stalin joining Hitler assures war. That is not a stretch of imagination.

I said in this House a year ago that you had better ride on the tail of a lion than on the head of a fox and that Russia was prepared to play any card which meant world war. I believe that still. I believe that Stalin joined with Hitler because he wanted to ensure war. He invited other nations to send their military advisers to Russia to take part in discussions, but that was all window-dressing, because for Russia to have joined with Hitler, without making a pretense of lining up with the Peace Front, would not have been accepted by the country. Therefore, Stalin played the window-dressing card. We know that from February Stalin was having discussions with Hitler about joining the war with Hitler. On the Sunday on which war was declared, I pointed out — and my remarks were re-sented even by some Labor Members — that the mobilization of the Russian army at the rear of the Polish army meant either that Russia intended to hold a part of the Polish army on

that frontier in order to aid Hitler, or that she meant at the proper moment to tear away part of Poland for her own use. That rape took place.

The apology we get in the country is one that has to be answered. It is that if Stalin had not joined Hitler, Hitler would have had the whole of Poland, and that, therefore, Stalin saved half of Poland. Let us consider the consequences. Hitler has handed over the Christians, the capitalists, the landlords, and indeed, the Communists, for it is as dangerous to be a Communist in Russia as it is to be one in Berlin. These people are handed over to Stalin. Stalin hands over to Hitler the Jews, the Communists, the Socialists, and the Catholics. But the apologists of Stalin do not tell us that instead of defending and retrieving the half of Poland, Stalin was responsible for handing over these people into the hands of Hitler — no, their program and policy had always been that if Stalin stood by Britain and France, Hitler would not dare to move. Therefore, the speech made by the hon. Member for West Fife was hypocritical in the extreme, and would not take in a nine-years old schoolboy. It was a face-saving attempt by a man belonging to a party which is completely discredited throughout the world because of the actions of the Russians at this stage. . .

The hon. Member asks me in the middle of a Debate in the House of Commons suddenly to throw back at him the exact figures of production. If I had known that he was going to ask me for those figures, of course I should have had them.

MR. EDWARDS: Is it not the fact that Russia is barely able to supply her own requirements in oil?

MR. MCGOVERN: That statement may be satisfactory to the hon. Member, but I know that Russian Oil Products are sending millions of tons of petrol and oil annually to the Glasgow Corporation alone.

MR. EDWARDS: The figure of exports from Russia for the last year is less than 1,000,000 tons, and that represents her export surplus.

MR. MCGOVERN: If I were going into this matter more closely and in detail as I could do —

MR. EDWARDS: I think the hon. Member should do so.

MR. MCGOVERN: I can assure the hon. Member that not only is Russia exporting oil to this country, but that part of the finance gained from her oil exports is used in propaganda in this country.

MR. SILVERMAN (Lab.): I have been waiting for a long time to know what exactly it is that the hon. Member is advising the House to do.

MR. MCGOVERN: The hon. Member must wait and draw his own deductions from my speech just as I have to draw my deductions from his speeches, because very often I do not know what he is asking the House to do. Russia, I say, joining in this combination, has made it extremely difficult at this stage because of the fact that certain chemicals, minerals, oil, and food can be supplied to assist Germany. We must not forget either that Germany recognized that this war was going to take place and conserved tremendous food supplies. She is able to terrorize Rumania and almost every country throughout the Balkans and Central Europe, and she is sitting with the prospect of waging a war on one front, on the West. She can allow the French and British to dash themselves against these Western fortifications, she can take a tremendous toll and throw them back periodically to their former positions, and she can maintain a struggle of that kind for a very long time. We might sacrifice 3,000,000 men; we might get to our three years' limit, and we have not then defeated Hitlerism. Are we still going on saying that we have to fight to the last man, but that the last man shall be a man inside this House? I do not see many uniforms in this House. I have been rather staggered at how few uniforms I have seen worn by men who wanted to conduct this war to the last man.

In this situation we are asked to consider terms if they are proposed.\* I am not saying to the Government that they must of necessity accept the terms that are proposed. I believe that Germany would not expect us to accept them just now, because they have a few things to do along with Comrade Stalin yet, and there is a number of countries bordering on

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\* See No. 53.

Russia and Germany that are to be put under their heel. They have to clear the decks throughout the Balkans and Central Europe, to remove French and British influence, both trading and military, from those areas. From my angle, the war narrows itself down to this — and I have said it so often that I do not want to repeat it if I can help — that it is a war between Britain and France, which have tremendous Imperial power and resources, which have raw materials, which have Empires, and which have yellow, white and black slaves who work at very low pittances and from whom tremendous profits are wrung, and Hitler, a rising Imperialist Power, Italy and Japan, the younger nations coming up. They want Empires, and if you want and believe in Empires, they are as much entitled to believe in them as you are. If they see that the only way to get them is by challenging the power of Britain and France, naval, military, and in the air, then that is their job, and the struggle today is between these two Imperialistic sections...

There are many people who are carried away by the actions of Russia because they see in Russia a great Socialist State. I do not. I see it, if I may use the word, as a bastardized system between National Socialism and Nazism, with national ownership as the basis and a terrorist bureaucracy at the top, and I see in Germany a private profit-owning system that Hitler has gripped by the throat and that with political revolution in Germany could be turned to the same system as Russia with very little trouble. Whether it be Stalin or Hitler, I loathe their actions against their fellow-men in each country, I loathe their actions against the people of Poland, I loathe the economic struggles that take place periodically when the youth of the world are hurled into the tremendous struggle to kill one another, to disembowel, and blind, and draw asunder humanity. I urge Members of this House to be careful in demanding that this shall go on and on to the end, because in the end Hitlerism may still be there; and remember that revolutions can come not only in Germany, but could just as easily come in this country and in France if you got the youth of these nations into action to preserve their real liberty and to down their real aggressors throughout the ages.

## Part IV

### Poland Fights On

OCTOBER 4, 1939 TO SEPTEMBER 9, 1941.

#### 58. NEW POLISH GOVERNMENT.

##### BRITISH WAR AIMS.

(OCTOBER 4, 1939) \*

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1939, while Poland was menaced both from the West and the East, the President of Poland, Ignacy Moscicki, issued from the town of Kutu (Poland) the following proclamation:

*"I have resolved to transfer the seat of the President of the Republic and of the Highest Offices of the State to the territory of one of our Allies."*

*On the same day an act was signed by President Moscicki, appointing Mr. Wladyslaw Raczekiewicz, former Speaker of the Senate, as his successor.*

*The Polish Constitution makes no provision for a successor to the presidency during peace-time. In case of the death or resignation of the President during peace-time, the Speaker of the Senate immediately assumes the functions of the office*

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1296, 1300, 1315-1316, 1326-1328



until an assembly of electors is called (art. 23) and a new president is elected. In time of war, article 24 of the Constitution comes into effect. It is as follows:

*"In the event of war the term of the President's office shall be prolonged until three months after the conclusion of peace; the President of the Republic shall then, by a special act, promulgated in the Official Gazette, appoint his successor, in case the office falls vacant before the conclusion of peace. Should the President's successor assume office, the term of his office shall expire at the end of three months after the conclusion of peace."*

On September 30, 1939, President Moscicki, at that time in Rumania, resigned as President of Poland. On the same day Mr. Raczkiewicz took his constitutional oath in Paris and became President of the Republic of Poland. He accepted the resignation of the former Cabinet headed by General Slawoj-Skladkowski, and, conforming to art. 12 of the Constitution, he appointed General Wladyslaw Sikorski as Prime Minister of Poland and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces in France. The new Polish Government formed by General Sikorski was recognized by all foreign governments (except Germany, the Soviet Union and their puppet governments).

On October 2, 1939 the U. S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued the statement "that mere seizure of territory does not extinguish the legal existence of a Government. The United States, therefore, continues to regard the Government of Poland as in existence in accordance with the provisions of the the Constitution of Poland."

In a discussion of the war situation in the House of Lords on October 4 Viscount Halifax expressed Great Britain's position in relation to the reorganization of the Polish Government and its status.

LORD SNELL (Lab.): . . . The first remark I would like to make concerns Poland. The fact that dismemberment of the soil of Poland has taken place and that it has been divided between the Prussian eagle and the Russian bear, does not

mean of necessity the end of the Polish nation. A nation is not a piece of territory merely, but a people, and, so long as a people have one spirit and one purpose, that nation remains. I believe that Greece, in ancient times, was wherever her people found themselves, just as we like to believe that Britain exists in our Dominions and in many other Colonies as well as in these shores which we inhabit. So the Polish spirit is not destroyed, because the principle of nationality is too strong to permit that to take place. Therefore we can welcome the declaration that was made yesterday, that the purpose for which a war was undertaken is not now meaningless in the face of what has taken place. . .

VISCOUNT SAMUEL (L.): . . .As to the division of Poland that has lately been proclaimed by Germany and Russia, we may feel confident that that will not stand. That matter is not to be decided by those two Powers at the present time; the Peace Conference at the end of the war will deal with it. We may all of us recollect how in March, 1918, there was another treaty between Germany and Russia, signed after long negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, followed by a treaty on similar lines between Germany and Rumania — both of them very advantageous to a triumphant Germany; but events decided otherwise. . .

LORD PONSONBY OF SHULBREDE (Lab.): . . .The First Lord of the Admiralty in his broadcast\* said that the expansion of Germany to the East has now been stopped. Then what are we going on fighting for? Do His Majesty's Government think that the expansion of Germany towards the East has been stopped by Russia, and if not, can they not restrain — I have advocated this before — the First Lord of the Admiralty? Can they somehow arrange that he does not speak for the Government but he speaks for the Admiralty? He speaks very well indeed and everybody listens to him with great attention, and when he speaks for the Admiralty everybody likes to hear put in such graphic terms the splendid services of the Navy. But when he goes and talks policy, he must either be represent-

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\* See No. 57.

ing His Majesty's Government or else he ought not to say what he does.

I do not think we can take it for certain that Russian diplomacy means that. I do not know what it means; I will not venture to guess, and I am sure it gives the Foreign Secretary many sleepless nights. But I should like to say a word about our pledge to Poland. I objected to that very much in this House on more than one occasion. I think it was really disastrous that we should have made a pledge to a Central European State when we knew perfectly well that from a military point of view we could not implement it. The poor, unfortunate Polish people, whatever their Government may have thought, were firmly under the impression that by some miracle British forces, either in the air or on land, were going to come to help them. Might I ask the Foreign Secretary to ask the Prime Minister to remember what he said on March 17 at Birmingham? It is only a small paragraph and I am not going to quote it. It begins "Really I have no need to defend my visits to Germany," and in the subsequent lines of the speech, if you substitute the word "Poland" for "Czechoslovakia," what the Prime Minister said was absolutely, literally and permanently true...

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : ... The noble Lord, Lord Snell, said with reference to Poland that partition could not destroy the spirit of the Polish armed forces and all the bravery that has been shown by the Polish people will no doubt be a fresh inspiration to the Poles to regain the independence of which they have been temporarily robbed, as they will also be an inspiration to other peoples. Your Lordships will perhaps be aware that the Polish President, M. Moscicki, has resigned his functions as President, and that those functions have been constitutionally assumed by M. Racziewicz, a former President of the Polish Senate, and that the Polish Government is being established on French soil. His Majesty's Government will, of course, recognize as the legal Polish Government the Government so established, and I have no doubt that that Government will

continue to preserve intact the spirit of Polish independence and of Polish resistance.

The reasons why His Majesty's Government entered the war are well enough known. The noble Lord, Lord Ponsonby, referred to the guarantee that His Majesty's Government had given to Poland, and it is quite true historically that the aggression of Germany on Poland called into play the obligations which we had assumed. But our thought would be incomplete unless we had also had in mind the reasons for which those obligations were assumed. Some might say that we accepted them in our own national self-interest. I do not suppose the noble Lord, Lord Ponsonby, or the noble Lord, Lord Arnold, would do other than challenge any such statement, but there are many people who would be prepared to maintain the counter argument against them. And in one sense that statement is most certainly true, inasmuch as German policy, so far as this has had for its purpose the domination of other countries and the destruction of their independence, has logically enough sought to proceed by way of one country at a time, and therefore it was quite reasonable for everybody who might feel themselves threatened, as we have often said to each other in this House, to draw together in making a common effort for self-protection.

That again in itself was but a perfectly natural expression of causes that we, I think, regard as much more fundamental, and the greatest of all these causes was the recognition by men and women in a great many countries that the method and the consequence of German aggression was nothing less than the destruction of everything which for them gave life its value. Such people had watched the tale of oppression in Germany. The noble Lord, Lord Ponsonby, said that that is the misfortune of the Germans and not our business. None the less people had watched it and had been impressed by it. They had seen its extension outside Germany, first to Austria and then to men of another race in Czechoslovakia. They feared, as has in fact been the case, that they were going to see the same treatment meted out to Poland. Each of these acts as they have taken place has resulted, of

course, in the forcible alteration of the map of Europe, each has signified in the first place a continuous reversion to the way of violence in international dealing, of which the immediate consequence is, or would have been if left unchecked, to leave the weak wholly at the mercy of the strong.

But even worse than that, it has — has it not? — signified the attempt by Germany to force all who might be brought under the merciless control of a Party Government in Germany to surrender all their liberty, liberty of life and liberty of conscience, under pain of every kind of persecution that the ingenuity of the governing elements in Germany might think it well to employ. Whatever differences there may have been, either here or elsewhere, upon issues of policy during the past months or years, there can, I think, be no difference of view among kindly, decent-living people of whatever nationality that these things do bring shame upon the Government that tries so to maintain itself in power and that if the world were to permit a continuance of these things, it would really be accepting a kind of condemnation to moral suicide, which indeed by its own acquiescence it would have deserved.

These, then, are the reasons for which this country and France have thought it preferable to fight, when the only alternative was to see all the causes and the ideals which have claimed the best human loyalty through the ages destroyed before our eyes. I found myself wondering, as I listened to the noble Lord, Lord Ponsonby, how, if he believes, as I am sure he does believe, that human progress really depends upon the maintenance of certain values in the world, human progress may be maintained if we and others who have it in our power to defend them were to stand idly by and see in one country after another those human values extinguished and destroyed. It is indeed true that the things against which we fight are surely evil, and there can be no hope for the world, as I should think, or for the free life of the nations, until the lesson is learned that that way will not be tolerated.

If, therefore, England and France have embarked on this costly and dangerous struggle it is not because they seek material profit for themselves. War cannot bring material profit

to those who wage it, whether they win or lose. Nor certainly do England and France desire either aggrandisement or vengeance. But they do seek to re-establish for themselves and for others liberty under the reign of law, the right of peoples to decide their own destinies, to trade freely, and to live without fear. Surely then, we are fighting for causes that are vital not only for ourselves but also for all those everywhere who love liberty, and in which we can hardly fail to be supported by the sympathies and good will of many nations which, although they may not be called to take an active part as belligerents themselves, are not less passionately devoted to the things that we seek to defend than we are ourselves...

## 59. POLISH GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION (OCTOBER 11, 1939)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister the present position with regard to the recognition of the new Polish Government now seated in Paris...

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. RUTLER): On October 4, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom recognized the assumption of the functions of President of the Polish Republic by M. Raczkiewicz. Sir H. Kennard will proceed to France in a few days in order to resume his duties as Ambassador at the seat of the Polish Government. The Polish Foreign Minister, M. Zaleski, is arriving in London today and my Noble Friend is looking forward to an exchange of views with him.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 308.

60. HITLER'S PEACE PROPOSALS. WAR AIMS.  
(OCTOBER 12, 1939)\*

ON OCTOBER 6, 1939 Hitler made a speech in the Reichstag in which he proposed a peace on the basis of Germany's existing conquests and remaining needs. "If Europe is really sincere in her desire for peace, then the states in Europe ought to be grateful that Russia and Germany are prepared to transform this hotbed into a zone of peaceful development and that these two countries will assume the responsibility and bear the burdens inevitably involved. For the Reich this project, since it cannot be undertaken in an imperialistic spirit, is a task which will take fifty to a hundred years to perform. Justification for the activity on Germany's part lies in the political organizing of this territory as well as in its economic development. In the long run, of course, all Europe will benefit from it. Second, and in my opinion by far the most important task, is the creation of not only a belief in, but also a sense of European security. . . Neither force of arms nor lapse of time will conquer Germany. There never will be another November 1918 in German history. It is infantile to hope for the disintegration of our people."

On October 11 Polish Foreign Minister August Zaleski arrived in London on an official visit.

On October 12 Prime Minister Chamberlain made an answer to Hitler's peace offers.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN) : Last week, in speaking of the announcement about the Russo-German pact, I observed that it contained a suggestion that some peace pro-

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 563-574, 580-582, 595-596, 1408-1410.

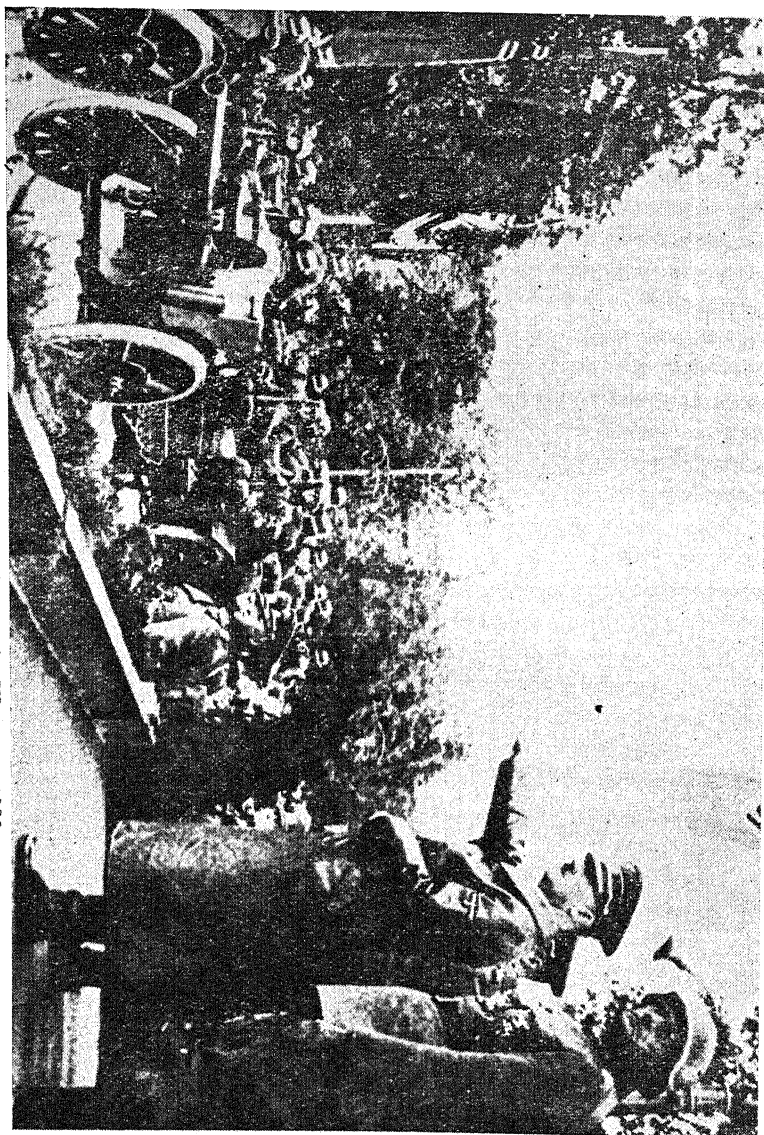
posals were likely to be put forward, and I said that, if such proved to be the case, we should examine them in consultation with the Governments of the Dominions and of the French Republic in the light of certain relevant considerations. Since then, the German Chancellor has made his speech, and the consultations I referred to have taken place. I must now state the position of His Majesty's Government. Before, however, I inform the House of the results of our examination of the speech, I must ask hon. Members to recall for a few moments the background against which his proposals appear.

At the end of August His Majesty's Government were actively engaged in correspondence with the German Government on the subject of Poland. It was evident that the situation was dangerous, but we believed that it should be possible to arrive at a peaceful solution if passions were not deliberately stimulated and we felt quite certain that the German Government could, if they desired, influence their friends in Danzig in such a way as to bring about a relaxation of tension and so create conditions favorable to calm and sober negotiation. It will be remembered that in the course of this correspondence the German Chancellor expressed his wish for improved relations between our two countries as soon as the Polish question was settled, to which His Majesty's Government replied that they fully shared the wish, but that everything turned on the nature and method of settlement with Poland. We pointed out that a forcible solution would inevitably involve the fulfilment of our obligations to Poland and we begged the German Chancellor to enter into direct discussions with the Polish Government in which the latter Government had already expressed its willingness to take part.

As everyone knows, these efforts on the part of His Majesty's Government to avoid war and the use of force were in vain. In August last the President of the United States made an appeal to Herr Hitler to settle his differences with Poland by pacific means in order to prevent war breaking out in Europe. At about the same time the King of the Belgians, the Queen of the Netherlands, His Holiness the Pope, and Signor Mussolini all tendered their good offices, but equally in vain.



Hitler reviews German Troops in Warsaw, 1939.



It is evident now that Herr Hitler was determined to make war on Poland, and whatever sincerity there may have been in his wish to come to an understanding with Great Britain it was not strong enough to induce him to postpone an attack upon his neighbor. On September 1st Herr Hitler violated the Polish frontier and invaded Poland, beating down by force of arms and machinery the resistance of the Polish nation and army. As attested by neutral observers, Polish towns and villages were bombed and shelled into ruins; and civilians were slaughtered wholesale, in contravention, at any rate in the latter stages, of all the undertakings of which Herr Hitler now speaks with pride as though he had fulfilled them.

It is after this wanton act of aggression which has cost so many Polish and German lives, sacrificed to satisfy his own insistence on the use of force, that the German Chancellor now puts forward his proposals. If there existed any expectation that in these proposals would be included some attempt to make amends for this grievous crime against humanity, following so soon upon the violation of the rights of the Czechoslovak nation, it has been doomed to disappointment. The Polish State and its leaders are covered with abuse. What the fate of that part of Poland which Herr Hitler describes as the German sphere of interest is to be does not clearly emerge from his speech, but it is evident that he regards it as a matter for the consideration of Germany alone, to be settled solely in accordance with German interests. The final shaping of this territory and the question of the restoration of a Polish State are, in Herr Hitler's view, problems which cannot be settled by war in the West but exclusively by Russia on the one side and Germany on the other.

We must take it, then, that the proposals which the German Chancellor puts forward for the establishment of what he calls "the certainty of European security" are to be based on recognition of his conquests and of his right to do what he pleases with the conquered.

It would be impossible for Great Britain to accept any such basis without forfeiting her honor and abandoning her

claim that international disputes should be settled by discussion and not by force.

The passages in the speech designed to give fresh assurances to Herr Hitler's neighbors I pass over, since they will know what value should be attached to them by reference to the similar assurances he has given in the past.

It would be easy to quote sentences from his speeches in 1935, 1936 and 1938 stating in the most definite terms his determination not to annex Austria or conclude an Anschluss with her, not to fall upon Czechoslovakia and not to make any further territorial claims in Europe after the Sudetenland question had been settled in September, 1938. Nor can we pass over Herr Hitler's radical departure from the long professed principles of his policy and creed, as instanced by the inclusion in the German Reich of many millions of Poles and Czechs, despite his repeated professions to the contrary, and by the pact with the Soviet Union concluded after his repeated and violent denunciations of Bolshevism.

This repeated disregard of his word and these sudden reversals of policy bring me to the fundamental difficulty in dealing with the wider proposals in the German Chancellor's speech. The plain truth is that, after our past experience, it is no longer possible to rely upon the unsupported word of the present German Government.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.) : Or Russia's.

THE PRIME MINISTER: It is no part of our policy to exclude from her rightful place in Europe a Germany which will live in amity and confidence with other nations. On the contrary, we believe that no effective remedy can be found for the world's ills that does not take account of the just claims and needs of all countries, and whenever the time may come to draw the lines of a new peace settlement, His Majesty's Government would feel that the future would hold little hope unless such a settlement could be reached through the method of negotiation and agreement.

It was not, therefore, with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on war but simply in defense of freedom. It is not alone the freedom of the small nations that is at stake:

there is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of Great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France, and, indeed, of all freedom-loving nations. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle, and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. Looking to the future we can see that deep changes will inevitably leave their mark on every field of men's thought and action, and if humanity is to guide aright the new forces that will be in operation, all nations will have their part to play.

His Majesty's Government know all too well that in modern war between great Powers victor and vanquished must alike suffer cruel loss. But surrender to wrongdoing would spell the extinction of all hope, and the annihilation of all those values of life which have through centuries been at once the mark and the inspiration of human progress.

We seek no material advantage for ourselves; we desire nothing from the German people which should offend their self-respect. We are not aiming only at victory, but rather looking beyond it to the laying of a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of every succeeding generation.

I am certain that all the peoples of Europe, including the people of Germany, long for peace, a peace which will enable them to live their lives without fear, and to devote their energies and their gifts to the development of their culture, the pursuit of their ideals and the improvement of their material prosperity. The peace which we are determined to secure, however, must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and repeated threats. What stands in the way of such a peace? It is the German Government, and the German Government alone, for it is they who by repeated acts of aggression have robbed all Europe of tranquility and implanted in the hearts of all their neighbors an ever-present sense of insecurity and fear.

I am glad to think that there is complete agreement between the view of His Majesty's Government and those of the French Government. Hon. Members will have read the speech

which was broadcast by M. Daladier last Tuesday. "We have", he said, "taken up arms against aggression; we shall not lay them down until we have sure guarantees of security — a security which cannot be called in question every six months."

Advantage has also been taken of the presence of the Polish Foreign Minister — whom we have been glad to welcome to this country — to consult with the Polish Government, and I am happy to say that we have found entire identity of view to exist between us.

I would sum up the attitude of His Majesty's Government as follows:

Herr Hitler rejected all suggestions for peace until he had overwhelmed Poland, as he had previously overthrown Czechoslovakia. Peace conditions cannot be acceptable which begin by condoning aggression.

The proposals in the German Chancellor's speech are vague and uncertain and contain no suggestion for righting the wrongs done to Czechoslovakia and to Poland.

Even if Herr Hitler's proposals were more closely defined and contained suggestions to right these wrongs, it would still be necessary to ask by what practical means the German Government intend to convince the world that aggression will cease and that pledges will be kept. Past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government. Accordingly, acts — not words alone — must be forthcoming, before we, the British peoples, and France, our gallant and trusted Ally, would be justified in ceasing to wage war to the utmost of our strength. Only when world confidence is restored will it be possible to find — as we would wish to do with the aid of all who show good will — solutions of those questions which disturb the world, which stand in the way of disarmament, retard the restoration of trade and prevent the improvement of the well-being of the peoples.

There is thus a primary condition to be satisfied. Only the German Government can fulfill it. If they will not, there can as yet be no new or better world order of the kind for which all nations yearn.

The issue is, therefore, plain. Either the German Government must give convincing proof of the sincerity of their desire for peace by definite acts and by the provision of effective guarantees of their intention to fulfill their undertakings, or we must persevere in our duty to the end. It is for Germany to make her choice.

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) : I welcome the statement that has just been made by the Prime Minister. It has, I think, put forward with great clarity the essential difficulties of dealing with what have been called the peace proposals of Herr Hitler. The first thing is that they are made by a man whose word is utterly worthless, who offers nothing but vague future promises; the second is that they are made after brutal and unprovoked aggression and are based on the acceptance of the result of that aggression as a *fait accompli*; and the third is that there is no indication of any change of heart or mind on which hopes for the future could be founded. We are asked to condone a crime and trust that criminal. No British Government, whether from the point of view of principle or from the point of view of prudence, could make any answer of a different kind from that which the Prime Minister has made. I believe that the people of this country will endorse it and that those of other countries will approve of it.

This country went to the extreme limit of forbearance before it took up arms. It has shown abundantly its desire for peace. It has shown its willingness to discuss every grievance. At any time, if Herr Hitler had wished it, he could have discussed problems of frontiers, problems of colonies, problems of raw materials or problems of disarmament. He has chosen instead the path of violence and force, and his professions of good will to various nations have proved to be only the prelude to aggression. It is, therefore, clear that what is required is something more than a suggestion of terms of peace. There must be the conditions existing under which you can have peace. I am sure that everyone in this country is open to consider any way by which hostilities may be brought to a close, provided that we are going to carry out our honorable under-

takings. I think the German people should know that at any time they can get peace, but they must abandon the method of violence and aggression. The German people must realize that they have rulers who have forfeited every title to be trusted. Abandonment of aggression is not a term of a peace settlement; it is an indispensable condition.

We of the Labor party have taken up a definite stand against wanton aggression and for the rule of law. We are convinced that there is no prospect of enduring peace until we get rid of violence. The attitude of our party was, I think, stated most admirably by my colleague the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood) on another occasion, and I could not hope to find better words than his. We are resolved to carry on this struggle until we have secured the necessary conditions for a peaceful world, and in doing this we are acting in complete harmony with the policy of our party, affirmed and reaffirmed at conference after conference. It is impossible for anyone at the present time to discuss usefully the detailed terms of a European settlement, but we can and should affirm principles, and the first principle is that we cannot any longer endure a world that is subject at all times to violence, a world in which there is no rule of law. We can, I think, lay down the principles on which we think an enduring peace can be made. For our part, we laid down those principles long ago, and we see no reason to alter the principles of Labor's peace policy. We must get a new world, we must get a Europe in which the rights of all nations are recognized.

I was glad to hear the Prime Minister say, in his speech, that in arriving at any peace, we should do it in consultation with the German people — we should be considering the future of the German people. We are not standing for a Carthaginian peace, but we are standing for a Europe in which, while the German people will have their rights, all other nations will have their rights as well. There is a great deal of propaganda about Germany having room to live. The Poles must have room to live, the Czechs must have room to live. All the small nations as well as the great nations have their contribution to make, and the size of a nation or of its territory bears no in-

dication of the contribution that it has made to mankind — witness Palestine and Greece. If we are standing for that, we are standing against domination, we are standing against Imperialism, and we must also stand for the only conditions under which it is possible that those smaller nations could exist, and that is a system of collective security in which they do not have to rely only on their own strength. If we want to build up a new Europe, it must be a more closely coordinated Europe.

We stand for disarmament. Herr Hitler talks of disarmament, but you must have disarmament of the mind first of all, and you must have security if you are going to get disarmament. Mr. Arthur Henderson, who did so much in the formation of our foreign policy, laid it down, and the three years' struggle at the Disarmament Conference confirms irrefutably the experience of succeeding years, and that is that no disarmament is possible except in exchange for really effective measures for collective defense. Those are the principles that we would lay down. We hear talk of Colonies. We do not believe in the carving-up of Colonies or in the exploitation of Colonies by any Power. We believe in Colonies being for the people who live there, and in the use of all the resources of the world in the interests of all the peoples of the world. We believe that we can build up a new world, but it must be a new world based on principles, and those are the principles of democracy, that regard the rights of others as well as our own rights.

I think that we should let the German people know that this choice is before them. The choice before them is not of being defeated in war and disappearing as effective members of the European comity of nations. They have the choice of stopping this war, they have the choice of contributing to a great Europe, and they know that this country is standing simply for the conditions of peace. But until we get these, until we get people on whose word we can rely, we must with resolution pursue this struggle, because no patched-up peace which is only going to lead to another war, no patched-up peace which will leave only an uneasy world staggering under a huge burden of armaments, will content us. We are in this struggle. We must



see that we come out of this struggle with nothing less than a new world.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.) : Like the Leader of the Opposition, my hon. Friends and I welcome the Prime Minister's statement. I came here today prepared to subject Herr Hitler's speech to a somewhat detailed analysis, but it has been so fully and fairly criticized by the Prime Minister that, for my part, I do not want to detain the House by travelling over the same ground. My hon. Friends and I agree with the response which the Prime Minister has given this afternoon to Herr Hitler's speech. . .

So I hope that His Majesty's Government may soon find themselves in a position to proclaim — I think this afternoon it is true to say that His Majesty's Government have proclaimed — that their war aims are not merely negative, but that they are fighting for the liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny; and — I would like them to add — from the burden and danger of national armaments; for the rebuilding of a European order based upon law, justice and good faith, and equipped with organs of consultation and, within limits which could only be prescribed by an international conference, of government and supervision; and with courts of law and equity with adequate force at their disposal to assert their authority.

The Archbishop of York spoke words of inspiration to the country in his broadcast a week ago. Speaking of the attempt in Germany to make the Nazi ideology into a religion and to exalt Herr Hitler as a god, he said this:

“Against the deified nation of the Nazis our people have taken their stand as a dedicated nation.”  
dedicated, as he explained, to the pursuit of the ideals of freedom and justice, justice to Czechs, justice to Poles and justice to Germans, to; and to the pursuit of peace and the common weal of mankind. That was surely a noble lead for a great ecclesiastic to give. Those are the words with which the hungry sheep of this country are waiting to be fed, but they want them in the form of pledges of action from their responsible political leaders.

MR. RAIKES (C.): . . . I think that practically every section of the House has welcomed what has been said by the Prime Minister, but I think we are inclined to talk rather too much about peace and rather too little about victory. Peace must succeed victory, but if one thing is almost certain it is that, until either the German Army has been beaten in the field or the German home front has been broken behind the German Army, it is profitless to talk of a real peace, and a peace that will endure. Can you expect that Hitler fresh from his victories in Poland, freshly inspired by a few people, who do not represent general feeling, in this country and elsewhere, talking about negotiations, will offer us terms which we can accept? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Sir. A. Sinclair), in a speech with every word of which, if I may say so, I agree, laid down clearly the sort of things that would have to be done before we considered taking the word of the German Government. The present German Government would have to resign. There would have to be some reparation for the wanton sufferings and misery inflicted on the Polish people.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.): Reparations again.

MR. RAIKES: The hon. Member says, "Reparations again", but, for my part, I should expect to see some gesture made by the Germans in the way of restoring the towns that have been wantonly destroyed. There is one other side of the problem about which I should like to say a word; that is, with regard to South Eastern Europe. There appears at this moment to be a possibility that a Balkan Front may become, for the first time, a real possibility. You have these little States, that have been frightened to death by the Soviet-German agreement, that have seen the small States further North being swallowed up, showing signs of coming together in a common front. I hope that, if the common front is formed, the Government and all sections in the House will remember that those countries are probably more afraid of the Soviet than of Germany.

SIR RICHARD ACLAND: Question.

MR. RAIKES: Their governments certainly are; and you have, in a realistic world, to deal with the governments which are in office at a particular time. [Interruption.] We have, at

any rate, given a pledge that there is one leader we propose to see destroyed. It is not our business to say that we are not prepared to give any sort of support to a particular Balkan State because it has not the sort of government that the hon. Member for Barnstaple (Sir R. Acland) wants.

MR. A. EDWARDS: Does the hon. Member say that it is part of this Government's policy to destroy Hitler?

MR. RAIKES: I understood that at the very start of this war the Government laid it down that Nazism must be defeated. It seems to me that it would be an abuse of terms to suggest that Nazism must be defeated and that Hitler might remain. I do not think we need quibble with words; it is pretty plain. In the Balkans you have a certain fear of Russia. We have speeches made, primarily for home consumption — I am thinking, of course, particularly of that made by the First Lord of the Admiralty — in which some distinction is drawn between Germany and Russia. It is pointed out, with some truth, that if Russia expands to the West it may make Germany's position more difficult, and, therefore, may be of some assistance to Britain and France.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.): You agree with that?

MR. RAIKES: I say that there are certain arguments which can be adduced to show that that would be of some disadvantage to Germany. But it would not be difficult to impress the small countries in the Balkans with the view that, after all, we are not awfully particular whether they are Bolshevik, if they are not Nazi. [Laughter.] Hon. Members may laugh, but if you express the view that the advance of Russia to the West would not be a bad thing, it is not difficult from that to spread the impression that if Russia goes a bit more to the South-West and grabs certain countries, there is something to be said for it. That is not a view that will appeal to the Balkan Entente. We see Baltic States swallowed up by Russia. Hitler is going to use that as a lever. He will say, "Look here, boys; you have seen what is happening. If you are prepared to give us all the things we require, without pressing too soon for payment, we will see that Russia does not come on you; but if not, would you sooner have a little Nazi protection? Look at the

Sudetenland. Then look at East Poland." That sort of propaganda we shall have to counter by showing any country in Europe that is prepared to resist that we are prepared to support it.

Be that as it may, I should like to say this to the Government. I think this is going to be a long war, and our task is to make up our minds that victory is the main aim, and that our people have to be boldly told the facts. Peace talks will be considered at any time, but it is not likely that there will be peace before victory, and we have to face the pretty hard and difficult task before us. We face it in the knowledge of two things. We face it in the knowledge that by taking on this show over Poland — perhaps not an issue which some of us would have chosen — we have not taken it on from selfish motives. We have taken it on because we believe the time has come when aggression has to be checked, and when paganism and evil, and all that spirit which dominated Germany, and not only Germany alone, have to be removed. We have seen the example of those men and women in Warsaw who were prepared not only to resist to the very last, but to die rather than to submit to injustice, to the loss of their independence and the threats they were under. Looking at these things, I hope and believe that we shall go forward this winter, next year, and, if necessary, the year after, in the determination that we shall never be defeated in our purpose until aggression has ceased and liberty has been restored.

MR. STEPHEN (I.L.P.): ...Everyone recognizes, along with the Prime Minister, the background of the present war, and I and my hon. Friends realize it just as much as the Prime Minister and hon. Members opposite; but throughout the world there is a tremendous, a passionate desire for peace, and peace at once, in spite of the tragedy in Poland. There is talk about how dishonorable it would be to make peace while a bleeding Poland is in the position in which she is. I have heard hon. Members express indignation at the suggestion that there should be peace when one thinks of the tragedy of Poland; but I notice that when the same hon. Members are asked whether

the aggression by Soviet Russia on Poland is to be condoned, or whether the results of it are to be disregarded, evidently the question of honor does not arise in the same way. But the pledge to Poland was a pledge against aggression by Russia as much as by Germany.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD (Lab) : No certainly not.

MR. STEPHEN : Our guarantee to Poland did not specifically mention Germany. It mentioned aggression, and only aggression, and the pledge was one which had reference to Russia, although at that time it was not supposed that Russia would become an aggressor.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD : Does not the hon. Member know that when the Russians entered Poland they were welcomed universally by the peasants and the Jews, and by every man of his own sort in that country?

MR. STEPHEN : Does not the right hon. Gentleman know that the Russian forces in that part of Poland are still fighting against the Polish forces?

COLONEL WEDGWOOD : Rot.

MR. STEPHEN : The right hon. Gentleman says "rot". I can only say that he changes in his opinion so often that I cannot keep going round with him. He is in such a whirligig in politics. I am pointing out that the pledge given to Poland was one which entailed the defense of Poland against Soviet Russia just as much as against Germany. Yet there is no suggestion anywhere that British honor involves us in going to war with Soviet Russia, and I am glad of that.

MR. RAIKES : May I remind the hon. Member of one point? Is it not a fact that, under the guarantee, this country was called upon to come to the help of Poland if the Polish Government called upon our Government to assist them in the event of aggression? Is it not also the case that the Polish Government did call upon us to assist them in the case of the aggression from Germany, but that, strictly speaking, there was no call from the Polish Government — [Hon. Members: "Oh!"] — to assist them in regard to Russia? At any rate, no call was made and I think there is that difference between the two cases.

MR. STEPHEN : The House has heard the interruption of

the hon. Member. If hon. Members and the Government are content to base their case on the strict letter of the law in that way, then I think the less we say about honor the better.

MR. REMER rose —

MR. STEPHEN: I have only a limited time to speak and I have already given way. I would prefer now to proceed with my argument. I wish to make it perfectly plain that I think the British Government are well-advised in not seeking to declare war on Soviet Russia. I think they have acted wisely in that respect. . .

LORD ARNOLD (L.): . . . The Government do not tell us what will happen, or what the position will be when Hitler has been overthrown. Am I not right when I say that they give the ordinary man in the street to understand that when Hitler has been overthrown everything will be all right? Surely, that is a most dangerous illusion. When Hitler is overthrown he will not be succeeded by a nice, good, manageable Government which will do just what the British Government want. Certainly not. And even if he were succeeded by such a Government there is no guarantee whatever that it will last, not the slightest guarantee that it will not itself be very soon overthrown. But in all human probability, when Hitler is overthrown, Germany will go Communist, and the Hitler régime will be succeeded by a Communist Government.

Now this new German Government will at once make a definite alliance with Russia, and we shall at the end of this war, as I indicated, be in sight of the next war. That will be a war by the Democracies to defeat Communism in Europe, if they can. All that is now being said about the evils of Hitlerism will then be said equally strongly about the evils of Communism, and about the vital necessity of overthrowing the Communist Governments if Europe is going to have any peace. And where will Poland be then? What will then be the position of Poland? How are we going to restore Poland, for which we gave a pledge? Is Russia going to be driven out of Poland? Because if so that, of course, means war with Russia. Here I would just like to comment upon some words which the noble Earl, Lord

Stanhope, used in his statement. If I got them right, he said that the German Government, and the German Government alone, stands in the way of a settled Europe, or words to that effect. What about Russia and her aggression, which does not yet seem to have come to an end? Is Russia to be left out of account in looking to the future of Europe? How can His Majesty's Government categorically say all will be well if the present German Government is overthrown? To say that is opposed to all the probabilities. In fact, if we were consistent in our policy — and I would like to put this to my noble friend Lord Davies, who I believe is to speak — if the League of Nations supporters were consistent and had their way, we should have been at war with Russia now because of her aggression against Poland.

I want to say one further word about Poland, and it is this. When we are told that we must go on at any cost in order, for one thing, to help Poland, I would remind your Lordships that for 123 years — that is from 1795 to 1918 — British Governments acquiesced in the extinction of Poland as an independent separate State. That is a matter of history, and it is a little difficult to reconcile it with our new-found love for Poland. Then, apart from Poland, there are the baffling, age-long problems of Central and Eastern Europe. These were in existence long before Hitler came into power. Are they going to be settled? Is everything going to be satisfactorily arranged in regard to these problems when Hitler is overthrown? No, the simple truth is that when Hitler is overthrown you are not at the end of your troubles; you are only at the beginning of a lot of new troubles. You will not have solved the old ones, and you will have brought into existence a lot of new ones, Europe will be seething with problems. That will be the position, and we shall have new dictators, new Hitlers, new Stalins, new Mussolinis, leading on in due course to another war in another twenty years or less...

## 61. LOANS TO POLAND (OCTOBER 17, 1939)\*

MR. EDE (Lab.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the credit granted by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government was used by the latter prior to the invasion of Poland by Germany.

SIR J. SIMON: No part of the cash credit was used prior to the invasion of Poland by Germany.

MR. EDE: Are we to understand that the only money which left this country for armaments on the Continent prior to the outbreak of hostilities was the Czech gold which went to Germany?

SIR J. SIMON: The credit was, in fact, drawn upon by the Polish Government. I was asked whether any part of it was used prior to the invasion of Poland by Germany.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): Do I understand the Chancellor to say that the cash credit was granted to Poland before the war broke out?

SIR J. SIMON: No, the cash credit was granted on September 7, 1939...

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 681. See also Nr. 40



## 62. POLISH REFUGEES

(OCTOBER 17, 1939)\*

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.) (by Private Notice) asked the Prime Minister whether he was aware of the extent of the Polish refugee problem and what action he proposed to take in regard to it.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): Yes, Sir, although the statistics are so far incomplete, His Majesty's Government are well aware of the fact that large numbers of Poles have been enforced by the invasion of their country to flee to neighboring countries. His Majesty's Government further realize with what generosity those countries are devoting themselves to the task of supporting and assisting these unfortunate exiles, and it is also known that many charitable organizations, both allied and neutral, are devoting themselves to the study and solution of the problem. His Majesty's Government have every intention of encouraging this work, and have decided to establish a central agency to which all questions affecting Polish refugees should be addressed where necessary, and through which any official assistance or advice which might be required could be given. I am glad to be able to inform the House that Sir Francis Humphrys has consented to undertake this work under the general direction of my Noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Private individuals interested in the Polish refugee problem should continue to communicate with the recognized charitable organizations devoting themselves to this work, but in the event of any question involving official assistance or advice being raised, the persons or organizations

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 693-694.

concerned are invited to communicate with Sir Francis Humphrys at the Foreign Office.

MR. NOEL-BAKER: Do the Government propose to place any public funds at the disposal of Sir Francis Humphrys for the relief of refugees?

MR. BUTLER: The matter is under consideration.

MR. DAVIDSON: Will the wealthy Poles who have managed to arrive in this country be asked to make their contribution towards this problem?

MR. BUTLER: The hon. Member is aware of the difficulty of introducing refugees into this country, but no doubt everyone concerned who can afford the money will be glad to subscribe.

### 63. ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE (OCTOBER 17, 1939)\*

**F**OLLOWING ARE THE *prerogatives of the President under the Polish Constitution referred to in the statement of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Mr. Butler:*

*Art. 12. The President of the Republic. . . concludes and ratifies treaties with other States. . .*

*Art. 52: Agreements with other countries: commercial customs tariff, permanently burdening the State Treasury, containing obligations to impose new burdens upon the citizens or evoking change in the frontiers of the State — require, before ratification, the agreement of the Legislative Chambers expressed in the form of a law.*

SIR A. WILSON asked the Prime Minister whether the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Alliance was duly ratified by the Polish Diet as required by Polish law. . .

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 700.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : Under the Polish Constitution Charter of April 23, 1935, the prerogatives of the President include the conclusion and ratification of international treaties. The approval of the Polish Diet is not required except in certain types of agreement, of which the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance is not one. The entry into force of this agreement on signature was, therefore, in accordance with Polish constitutional law...

#### 64. REALIZATION OF SOVIET-GERMAN AGREEMENTS

(OCTOBER 18, 1939)\*

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ALFRED KNOX (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that a consignment, said to be a first consignment, consisting of 17½ tons of gold, has been transferred by the Soviet Government to Germany; and whether he can give any further information about this transaction.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : Yes, Sir, and my Noble Friend has reason to believe that this report is not without foundation.

SIR A. KNOX : Can my right hon. Friend state whether this sending of gold to a country at war with us is in accordance with complete neutrality?

MR. MARCUS SAMUEL (C.) : Is my right hon. Friend aware that Russia has now become a capitalist, money-lending State?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 844.  
See also No. 57.

## 65. CURZON LINE (OCTOBER 18, 1939) \*

SIR RALPH GLYNN (C.) asked the Prime Minister how far the line occupied in Poland by Russia conforms to the frontier known as the Curzon Line\*\* at the Peace Conference of 1919; and the location and extent of any further area of which the Russian troops are in occupation?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : I will, with permission, circulate a detailed description of the extent which the new frontier diverges from the Curzon Line. In brief it may be said that the divergencies are mainly in the north and south and that as a result it is estimated that Soviet troops are in occupation of some 8,000 square miles in all to the West of the Curzon Line.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : Is it not the case that the parts occupied over and above the Curzon Line protect for all time the Baltic and Balkan States from any further aggression?

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.) : Can the right hon. Gentleman say what is the population of the territory beyond the Curzon Line?

MR. BUTLER : I am answering shortly a question as to the total numbers on each side which are now in Soviet and German occupation, and I will give information to the hon. Member at a later date, if he will put down a question, as to the individual districts.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 845-846.

\*\* The so-called "Curzon Line" which was put forward during the Second World War as a solution to the problem of Polish-Soviet frontiers has become one of the most vague and hazy terms in international relations. Since the term "Curzon Line" has assumed importance as an euphemism for the partition of Poland, we shall give the facts and documents of its history in the Appendix to Volume II.

Following is the statement:

The new line approximates to the Curzon Line from about 50 miles north of Brest-Litovsk southwards along the River Bug to Krylow. It diverges from it considerably both in the north and in the south. In the north it leaves an area of some 7,000 square miles including the districts of Lomza, Bialystok, Augustow and Bielsk to the Russians, but most of the district of Suwalki, an area adjacent to East Prussia of some 860 square miles to the west of the Curzon Line and northeast of the present Russo-German line has been allotted to Germany. In the south the new line passes to the east of the Curzon Line in respect of a small area on the west of Sokal, but southwards of that area it forms a salient some 35 miles in depth to the west of the Curzon Line, returning to within about 10 miles of that line in the neighborhood of Przemyśl and crossing it again north of the Slovak frontier. The new line meets the Slovak frontier a few miles to the south and east of the old Curzon Line. In all it is estimated that Soviet troops are in occupation of about 8,000 square miles to the west of the Curzon Line.

MR. HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether any Governments have granted *de jure* or *de facto* recognition to the German and Russian partition of Poland; and whether, in the view of His Majesty's Government any such recognition would be consistent with any complete neutrality.

MR. BUTLER: Not so far as my Noble Friend is aware.

MR. HENDERSON: Can I have a reply to the second part of the question?

MR. BUTLER: As there were no incidents in regard to the first part, I did not think that the second part of the question arose.

MR. HENDERSON asked the Prime Minister the number of Poles, on the basis of mother tongue, inhabiting those districts of Poland annexed by Germany and those districts annexed by Russia, respectively.

MR. BUTLER: On the basis of the 1931 census the figures would be very approximately 17,250,000 and 4,750,000 respectively. More recent statistics are not available, and the figures

quoted do not, therefore, take account of the increase of population since 1931.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR A. LAMBERT WARD (C.) : Does my right hon. Friend consider that in an area such as this where so many people are bi-lingual, the mother tongue basis is a satisfactory test of genuine nationality?

66. ANGLO-POLISH ALLIANCE AND AGGRESSION  
FROM RUSSIA. LEGALITY OF THE POLISH  
GOVERNMENT.  
(OCTOBER 19, 1939)\*

**A**T THE MOMENT *when M.P. Mr. Harvey asked the Prime Minister about the obligations of the Anglo-Polish Alliance, the secret Protocol to the Agreement of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland (See No. 44) was not known.*

*Article 1 of the Agreement reads:*

*"Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power."*

*The explanation of the above article is contained in paragraph 1 (a) of the Secret Protocol as follows:*

*"1 (a) By the expression a 'European Power' employed in the Agreement is to be understood Germany."*

*It is evident that in case of German aggression on Poland all support and assistance by the United Kingdom would be given at once.*

*Paragraph 1 (b) of the Secret Protocol provided that:*

*"In the event of action within the meaning of Ar-*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 1082.

*ticles 1 or 2 of the Agreement by a European Power other than Germany, the Contracting Parties will consult together on the measures to be taken in common."*

*This means that in case of aggression or threat of independence of Poland by Russia, the United Kingdom and Poland would consult together on the measures to be taken in common.*

*The Polish Government, in its note of September 18, 1939, clearly reserved the right to call upon its Allies to fulfill the obligations of the Anglo-Polish and French-Polish Alliances.*

*"On the instruction of his Government the Polish Ambassador has the honor to communicate the following:*

*Today, September 17, 1939, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics committed an aggression against Poland. At dawn large Soviet forces crossed the Polish frontier at several points. The Polish troops resisted. In view of the superiority of the Soviet forces, the Polish troops withdrew, fighting.*

*The Polish Government have protested to Moscow, and have instructed their Ambassador to demand his passports. The Polish Government await from the Allied [French and British] Governments a categorical protest against the aggression committed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.*

*The Polish Government reserve the right to call upon their Allies in regard to the obligations devolving upon them by virtue of the treaties in force."*

*The Polish Government in London, not satisfied with Mr. Butler's interpretation of the Anglo-Polish Alliance with reference to Russia, began diplomatic action to clear up the situation. This resulted in an interview with the press by the Polish Premier Gen. Sikorski on Nov. 20, 1939, which, in turn, was followed by Prime Minister Chamberlain's declaration in the House of Commons on Dec. 6, 1939 (See No. 82) describing Great Britain's stand on the Polish-Soviet conflict in a different interpretation of the Anglo-Polish Alliance than that previously given by Mr. Butler.*

MR. HARVEY (Ind.) asked the Prime Minister whether the references to aggression by a European Power in the agreement of mutual assistance, signed between the United Kingdom and Poland on August 25 last, were intended to cover the case of aggression by other Powers than Germany, including Russia.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : No, Sir. During the negotiations which led up to the signature of the agreement, it was understood between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government that the agreement should only cover the case of aggression by Germany; and the Polish Government confirm that this is so.

MR. R. GLYNN (C.) asked the Prime Minister how much territory was added to Poland by action of Polish arms, over and above the area agreed on by the Treaty of Versailles; what were the dates of these acquisitions of territory; from what countries were they taken; and what area does he intend to recognize as the boundary of the Poland whose provisional Government is now being established in France and recognized as the Government of Poland.

MR. BUTLER: The Treaty of Versailles did not lay down the area of the Polish State, but dealt only with the frontier between Poland and Germany. Such parts of this frontier as the Treaty did not exactly define were left for determination, after the holding of plebiscites by the Conference of Ambassadors. The frontiers so determined has not been altered by the action of Poland. The other frontiers of Poland were subsequently settled by other international arrangements.

As regard the last part of the question, the present Polish Government is not a provisional Government, but the legal successor of the Government which it replaced. As Polish territory is in foreign occupation, no question of recognizing boundaries arises.



## 67. TRADE AND COMMERCE WITH POLAND (OCTOBER 24, 1939)\*

MR. PETHICK-LAWRENCE asked the President of the Board of Trade what steps he proposes to take to safeguard the position of British exporters who have supplied goods to Poland; and whether, in the interest of maintaining the effective organization of the firms concerned for the sake of the export trade, he will make available for the liquidation of Polish commercial debts any balances due in respect of imports to this country from Poland.

MR. STANLEY: While I recognize the hardship of the position of exporters to whom money is owed from Poland, and have carefully considered the suggestion made by the right hon. Member, it would involve undue interference with the rights of Polish creditors. Moreover, it would not be practicable to make a distribution which would be equitable among the various claimants.

MR. PETHICK-LAWRENCE: Can the right hon. Gentleman hold out no hope of getting rid of these balances, which are causing very great difficulty and embarrassment in certain sections of the trade?

MR. STANLEY: I would not like to say that I can hold out no hope. We are looking into the problem, but the right hon. Gentleman will realize the extraordinary difficulties of it, in view of the position of Poland today.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 1185-1186.

68. ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT AND RUSSIA.  
FINNISH-SOVIET RELATIONS  
(OCTOBER 26, 1939)\*

THE PROBLEM OF *whether the Anglo-Polish Agreement was binding in the case of Russian aggression* [see No. 65] was brought up again in the House of Lords and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Viscount Halifax made a statement about it.

*Soviet political activity at that time was concerned with:*

*September 28, 1939 — Signing of a German-Soviet agreement for the partitioning of Poland; declaration; and exchange of letters between Molotov and Ribbentrop [See No. 57].*

*September 28, 1939 — Signing of a pact of mutual assistance between Esthonia and Russia, giving Russia material, air bases, and military rights.*

*October 5, 1939 — Latvia signed a 10-year mutual aid treaty, giving Russia naval and air bases on the Baltic.*

*October 5, 1939 — Russia invited Finland to a political discussion.*

*October 9, 1939 — Finland began to mobilize her forces, because of the Russian demands.*

*October 10, 1939 — Russia concluded a 15-year mutual assistance pact with Lithuania for military and air bases and right to fortify the Lithuanian-German frontier.*

*October 11, 1939 — President Roosevelt expressed to President Kalinin his hope that "the Soviet Union will make no demands on Finland which are inconsistent*

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1559-1566.

*with the maintenance and development of amicable and peaceful relations between the two countries, and the independence of each."*

*October 14, 1939 — Russia demanded from Finland an exchange of territories and the right to station Russian garrisons in Finland.*

*October 23, 1939 — Finland made counter-proposals to Russia, which Russia rejected.*

THE EARL OF LISTOWEL (Lab.): . . . What would do more, I am convinced, than anything else to persuade the Russian Government of our sincerity and to gain their good will would be some sort of official intimation that we have no intention now or at any future date of challenging or interfering with their new position in Eastern and Northeastern Europe. Since it was made clear in another place that our pledge to Poland was only operative in the event of German aggression,\* we have no obligation of honor to resist Russian expansion in Eastern Europe, and we have no conceivable national or Imperial interests to protect in that part of the world.

LORD NEWTON (C.): Does the noble Earl include Poland among the Northern Powers?

THE EARL OF LISTOWEL: I was referring to Poland when I said that the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in another place had made it abundantly clear that our undertaking to Poland was to protect her from aggression if it came from Germany, and that we have no other obligations of honor in that respect.

LORD MOTTISTONE (L.): Could the noble Earl tell us how it differs, from the point of view of a Pole, whether he is attacked from the East or West? I understood we had promised to protect Poland against any hostile Power.

THE EARL OF LISTOWEL: The noble Lord has raised a very interesting question and, if I may, I shall leave the Foreign Secretary who will wind up the debate to answer it. He will do it

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\* See No. 63

in a way far more satisfactory to the House than I possibly could do.

LORD MOTTISTONE: My Lords, I had not intended to take part in this debate, but I could not sit still and hear the extraordinary doctrine preached in the British Parliament that after we had given our solemn pledge to Poland — that is to say, to 30,000,000 men, women and children that we would protect them from aggression — we should choose to say: "Oh, we only meant aggression from one particular side and not from any other." It would be a ridiculous thing to say, and it was not what we did say. I cannot stand here as an ordinary Englishman and allow myself to be accused of such a dreadful breach of faith. I know that every Englishman feels the same. It may be that Russia is too powerful for us to say, "Get out," but for us to say that we acquiesce in a wrong done is a thing which I cannot sit down under, and I hope no Englishman will. When the Foreign Secretary comes to speak I trust he will deal frankly with this matter and say, "Of course it was equally wrong for the invasion from the East to take place as it was for the invasion from the West." It is wasting words, saying what is not true, and being untrue to one's heart and soul to say that was wrong from the West is right from the East. The 30,000,000 Poles suffered just the same. I may say that I have recently returned from abroad —

LORD STRABOLGI (L.): The noble Lord has taxed my noble friend the Earl of Listowel, but did he hear the broadcast from a member of his own Party, the present Secretary of State for War,\* and also another former member of his own Party, the present First Lord of the Admiralty,\*\* neither of whom took the line that the noble Lord now takes?

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\* From the broadcast of the Secretary of State for War, Hore Belisha, of October 21, 1939:

"... There was a conflict between the forces of good and forces of evil, and what had to be determined was which should possess the soul of countries and of man. We did not enter the fight merely to reconstitute Czechoslovakia; nor did we fight merely to reconstitute a Polish State. Our aims were not defined by geographical frontiers. We were concerned with the frontiers of the human spirit. . ."

(From London "Times" October 23, 1939.)

\*\* See No. 57.

LORD MOTTISTONE: In this matter of honor I trust there is no difference among Parties. We gave our solemn pledge to 30,000,000 Poles that we would protect them from aggression from anyone. I do not care what anyone in any Party says, that is the truth, and let us stand by it. What is more, I am glad that the occasion has been given to me to speak, because, as I have said, I have recently returned from abroad. There I heard something of the sufferings of the Polish people which are now assuming an acute form, and I think it is just as well that the people of this country should realize the terrible things that are befalling and are about to befall the 30,000,000 Polish men, women and children in the East and in the West. What really should happen in the near future is that there should be some kind of conference of the peoples of Northern Europe in order to cope with the terrible famine that is gradually closing in this winter. There is great need of food, warmth and clothing. I am not exaggerating the horrors of what I have heard of the sufferings already beginning in that distressed country of Poland. No doubt there will be great sufferings in Russia, and a certain amount of suffering in Germany, but the great horror has begun to Poland and is rapidly approaching to a state of disaster amongst 30,000,000 Poles...

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) :...In many ways, I have not, I suppose, the knowledge of some of these things that perhaps is in the possession of Lord Listowel, but perhaps also I have other knowledge that is not in his possession, and I am bound to say that, while I hope I do not under-rate the importance of the considerations that he urged, I think that, if your Lordships are to have a balanced picture of the whole situation in mind, it is necessary to remember that the recent Soviet action in regard to the Baltic States has caused anxiety not only in quarters immediately concerned, and that the situation that has been created is not by any means wholly clear. It is certainly by no means clear at present what is the precise position of the negotiations in progress between the Soviet Government and Finland, and I would here say no word to make those negotiations more diffi-

cult; but it is certainly not clear what the reaction in certain circumstances would be in Scandinavian countries, and indeed outside, if deadlock in those negotiations should be reached. There should, as far as we are aware, be no conflict of interest between the Soviet and Finland that is not capable of adjustment, and for all reasons His Majesty's Government hope that the discussions now proceeding between those two countries may be brought to a reasonable conclusion.

The noble Earl, Lord Listowel, started a topic that brought the noble Lord, Lord Mottistone, to his feet; and the noble Earl, Lord Listowel, having started it, was good enough to say that he would leave the further development of the case to the Foreign Secretary. As the debate proceeded between him and Lord Mottistone, I found myself, as is not infrequently the case, reflecting that they were not perhaps arguing on exactly the same point, and that what had begun by being a matter of rather academic historical accuracy was developing into a contest and controversy of high principle in which their passions might easily become warmly engaged. I do not wish to enter into that passionate struggle, but I can perhaps say a word upon what I had thought had been the issue — namely, that of historical accuracy. I understood the noble Earl opposite to say — and he referred to the statement which was repeated on the subject in another place by my honorable friend, the Under-Secretary — that, in our discussions with Poland and with Colonel Beck, it had always been understood that the purpose of those discussions, and the sole purpose of those discussions, was to provide against a case of aggression by Germany. In making that statement I am not saying anything that would not carry the whole-hearted assent of the Polish Government, past and present. But when the noble Lord, Lord Mottistone, suggests that it would be the policy of this Government, or of any other Government that might fill our places, to recoil from pledges that they had given and from the understanding that those pledges carried, he will, I am sure, allow me to say, and I am sure that he will agree, that no Government holding our place would ever ask our country to do any such thing.

It is quite true, of course, as he says, that it makes no difference to the Poles whether they are invaded from East or West, and nobody who has any information as to what is now going on in the several parts of Poland can feel any other than a sense of the complete and utter tragedy of the suffering and want which, as he truly says, is going to grow much worse this winter and of which even today we have the most distressful reports. The last thing I would wish to do in this matter is to defend the action of the Soviet Government at the particular time at which they took it. But it is right to remember two things: Firstly, that they would never have taken that action if the German Government had not started it and set the example that they did set when they invaded Poland without any declaration of war. In the second place, it is perhaps, as a matter of historical interest, worth recalling that the action of the Soviet Government has been to advance the Russian boundary to what was substantially the boundary recommended at the time of the Versailles Conference by the noble Marquess, who used to lead the House, Lord Curzon, and who was then Foreign Secretary.

LORD MOTTISTONE: May I intervene, as the matter is of such vital importance? Is it not the fact that the Polish Government had a sure guarantee from the Soviet Government, under the Pact of Non-Aggression which they had with the Soviet Government, at the outbreak of war, that their eastern boundary should remain intact, so that, whatever happened, the advance to the Curzon line or any other line was a breach of faith?

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: I said I was not concerned to defend the action of the Soviet Government, or indeed of any other Government except my own. I was only stating historical facts, and I think that the historical facts as I have stated them are not capable of dispute. Then the noble Earl, Lord Listowel, led us a little bit into the sphere of economics, and it is I think true, as he said, that the Soviet Government, though their previous declarations of economic solidarity with Germany might have seemed to render it doubtful, do now appear willing to trade impartially with all the belligerents, and His Maje-

sty's Government have, as the House knows, already taken advantage of this attitude by the conclusion of the recent agreement for the exchange of timber against rubber and tin. We are now examining the possibility of doing further trade with advantage to this country, as I hope, and without incurring the risks to which Lord Listowel referred, on the same basis of barter, which is the only basis possible in present circumstances. If we are able to do that, I think — at least I hope — that it will be of commercial value to us and may have some of the wider valuable consequences that the noble Lord had in mind.

69. CHURCHILL ON RUSSIA  
(OCTOBER 26, 1939)\*

*MR. CHURCHILL'S BROADCAST of October 1 (See No. 57) aroused a great interest among the British people. In connection with this, on October 26, 1939, Mr. Mander asked the Prime Minister whether Mr. Churchill had spoken on behalf of the Government in his reference to Russian action in Poland.*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether the First Lord of the Admiralty in his broadcast speech on October 1 was speaking on behalf of the Government in his references to Russian action in Poland.

THE PRIME MINISTER: My right Hon. Friend in his broadcast statement on October 1 gave his own personal interpretation of events in his reference to Russian action in Poland. I can, however, assure the hon. Member that there is nothing in his interpretation which is at variance with the view of His Majesty's Government.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 1570.



70. CASE OF WILNO  
(OCTOBER 26, 1939)\*

POLAND'S EASTERN FRONTIERS *were established by the Riga Treaty of March 18, 1921.*

*Article 3 of the Riga Treaty reads:*

*"Russia and the Ukraine abandon all rights and claims to the territories situated to the west of the frontier laid down by the Article 2 of the present Treaty. Poland, on the other hand, abandons in favor of the Ukraine and of White Russia all rights and claims to the territory situated to the east of the frontier. The two Contracting Parties agree that, in so far as the territory situated to the west of the frontier fixed in Article 2 of the present Treaty includes districts which form the subject of a dispute between Poland and Lithuania, the question of the attribution of these districts to one of those two States is a matter which exclusively concerns Poland and Lithuania."*

*These frontiers were recognized by the Conference of Ambassadors on March 15, 1923. This conference also established the Polish-Lithuanian frontier, giving the region of Wilno to Poland. The corresponding paragraphs of the decision of the Conference follow:*

*"The British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, signatories with the United States of America, as the principal Allied and Associated Powers, of the Versailles Treaty of Peace:*

*Considering that by the terms of Article 78, Paragraph 3, of the said Treaty, it is for them to fix the frontiers of Poland, which have not been specified by that Treaty;*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 1582.

*Considering that on February 15, 1923, the Polish Government addressed to the Conference of the Ambassadors a request inviting the Powers there represented to avail themselves of the rights conferred on them by the said Article;*

*That, for its part, the Lithuanian Government has already, in its Note of November 18, 1922, shown itself anxious to see the said Powers avail themselves of the said rights;. . .*

*Considering that so far as its frontier with Russia is concerned, Poland has entered into direct relations with that State with a view to determining the line;*

*That in so far as the frontier between Poland and Lithuania is concerned, there is cause to take into account the actual situation resulting, notably, from the Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations on February 3, 1923:*

*Have charged the Conference of Ambassadors with the regulation of this question.*

*In consequence, the Conference of Ambassadors:*

*1. Decides to recognize as the frontiers of Poland:*

*(1) With Russia:*

*The line drawn and delimited by the agreement between the two States and on their responsibility dated November 28, 1922.\**

*(2) With Lithuania:*

*The line below described..." (There follows a detailed description of the frontier between Poland and Lithuania which includes Wilno in Poland.)*

*In the Final Protocol of the Agreement of May 5, 1934 extending the Polish-Russian Non-Aggression Pact (originally signed on July 25, 1932) to December 31, 1945, Russia once more reaffirmed her intention not to interfere in the settlement of the territorial question between Poland and Lithuania.*

*But on October 10, 1939, an agreement was concluded be-*

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\* Polish-Soviet Delimitation of Frontiers Agreement, signed November 28, 1922, under the Treaty of Riga.

tween Russia and Lithuania by virtue of which Russia gave Lithuania both the town and the district of Wilno.

Article 1 of this agreement reads as follows:

*"In order to strengthen the friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania, the city of Wilno and the district of Wilno, are hereby returned to the Republic of Lithuania by the U.S.S.R. to be reunited with the territory of the State of Lithuania. The boundary between the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of Lithuania is demarcated as shown in the attached map. This boundary line is to be more exactly described in a supplementary Protocol."*

On October 18, 1939 the Polish Government addressed the following note to all the countries with which it had diplomatic relations:

*"I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the Polish Government, having learned of the Pact of Mutual Assistance signed on October 10, 1939, between the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania, have presented a formal protest to the Lithuanian Government against the acceptance by the said Government of any territory ceded by the U.S.S.R. which does not belong to that Union."*

MR. PARKER (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister what is the area and population of the former Polish territory ceded by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to Lithuania; and what percentage of the population is estimated to be Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish and White Russian?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : It has been estimated that the ceded territory has an area of 6,800 square kilometres and a population of some 440,000. As its boundaries do not correspond with those of previous administrative divisions, it is not possible to quote official figures for the racial composition of its population; but I have seen an estimate of 80,000 for those of Lithuanian race.\*

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\* Actually the Polish territory ceded by Russia to Lithuania consisted of 8,800 square kilometers (3,203 square miles) and a population of 537,000 as follows:

Polish	271,000	Russian	17,000
Jewish	71,000	White Russian	14,000
Lithuanian	61,000	Other	3,000

## 71. FATE OF AMBASSADOR SKIRMUNT (NOVEMBER 1, 1939)\*

KONSTANTY SKIRMUNT WAS *the Polish representative in London for 12 years (November 1922 — July 1934); at first he was the Minister Plenipotentiary, and later from November 1929, he was the Ambassador.*

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ALFRED KNOX asked the Prime Minister whether he has any information regarding the fate of M. Skirmunt, for many years Polish Ambassador in England.

MR. BUTLER: My Noble Friend has read with great regret reports which have appeared that M. Skirmunt has been killed, but he has so far received no official confirmation.

SIR A. KNOX: Does not this mean in plain English that this aged diplomat has been foully murdered?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 352, p. 1905.

## 72. RELIEF FOR POLAND (NOVEMBER 7, 1939)\*

LORD MOTTISTONE (L.) had given Notice that he would ask His Majesty's Government whether they will take steps now in consultation with other Governments to diminish the tragedy of suffering and want which now prevails in all parts of Poland and which is going to grow much worse this winter; and move for Papers.

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1721-1738.

The noble Lord said: My Lords, I make no apology for detaining your Lordships for a few moments on this matter of the Polish people. The words on the Order Paper are not mine. They are the words spoken by the noble Viscount, the Foreign Secretary, the week before last when I raised this question. He then used the words "the tragedy of suffering and want which now prevails in all parts of Poland and which is going to grow much worse this winter."\*\* When I was abroad just before I spoke on that occasion, I heard from neutral and other sources how astonishing were the sufferings to which the Polish people had been subjected owing to the unparalleled things that happened to them through no fault of their own. When the noble Viscount, the Foreign Secretary, was good enough to reply to me, he used the words which are now on the Order Paper. As they were not reported in the Press at the time, it seemed to me most important that we who are so deeply committed to the well-being of the Polish people, as we were to the Belgian people twenty years ago, should try and show to those unfortunate people that we are not unmindful of them.

My noble friend the Foreign Secretary pointed out to me when I sent him the terms of my question, that it would not be possible for him to act in accordance with the suggestion I make. My question asked the Government

"whether they will take steps now in consultation with other Governments to diminish the tragedy of suffering and want which now prevails in all parts of Poland."

because, as he truly says in his letter, neither this nor other Governments can compel those who have invaded Poland — the German and the Soviet Governments — to do anything that we tell them to do; and to invite a rebuff would be worse than useless. Therefore, as he suggested, I will put my question in this form:

"To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are aware of the tragedy of suffering and want which now prevails in all parts of Poland consequent upon the

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\* See No. 68.

invasion of that country, and which is going to grow much worse this winter, and what steps they and other Governments are taking to relieve the hardship prevailing among the Polish refugees."

I have said that I do not apologize for bringing this question forward, because, unless I am misinformed — and indeed I know I am not, because of what the Foreign Secretary has said — the tragedy as he described it is even greater than your Lordships might have thought from the few items that have occurred in the Press.

I have seen those who were there at that terrible moment when that host, fleeing from the wrath of the invaders from the West, were confronted by the Red Army invading from the East. In common with some of your Lordships, at least one of whom I see before me, I saw the flight from invasion in the retreat from Mons. That was the Belgians fleeing; and I saw the further retreat of the French civilian population at the end of August and September, 1914; and it so happens that I am, I think, the only man in this House who saw the even more tragic *Via Dolorosa* of the refugees coming through Antwerp when the last of the Belgian people attempted to escape from the wrath that was befalling them. The same thing happened in both cases. There were burning villages and farms and the wretched people actually dying of starvation as they moved; children falling under the wheels and crushed to death, for all were so tightly packed in the road that with all the good will in the world the others could do nothing to help those who fell down. It was like the awful catastrophe on the Underground Railway, which perhaps some of your Lordships may remember, at Hampstead, where hundreds of people were killed by people pressing on behind. I saw with my own eyes, not tens of thousands, but hundreds of thousands of persons jammed in a narrow road, subject to bombardment.

I am told, and the Foreign Secretary will correct me if I am wrong, that the horrors which the Belgian people and some of the French suffered in 1914 are as nothing to what these Polish people suffered in this double invasion, first from one side and then from the other. Now it was no fault of the Poles.

They have an absolutely clean conscience. Whether they had any reason to suppose that they would have a benevolent neutrality behind them one need not inquire, because, though they had a reason to fear attack from the West, from the East they were protected by the very definite terms of a Treaty. This was the Pact of Non-Aggression between Poland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which was made in July, 1932, and was extended to 1945. Article I says:

“The two contracting parties reciprocally undertake refrain from taking any aggressive action against or invading the territory of the other party, either alone or in conjunction with other Powers.”

Article II says:

“Should one of the contracting parties be attacked by a third State or group of States, the other contracting party undertakes not to give aid or assistance either directly or indirectly to the aggressor State during the whole period of the conflict.”

And yet these unfortunate people have seen themselves invaded and have suffered all the consequences of invasion.

It has been claimed that, as the Polish State had ceased to exist, this Pact of Non-Aggression lapsed. We can leave that there: it is not an argument which anybody in this country would wish to adopt. The fact that the Poles have been so hardly used by fate makes us, I am sure — and my noble friends here will agree with me — all the more anxious to help these unfortunate people who have lost all that they had — their country, their goods, and in many cases the lives of those they held most dear, not in thousands or tens of thousands, but literally in millions. That being the position, I would venture to ask the Foreign Secretary when he comes to reply to tell us, if it be true that the sufferings are as great as I have endeavored briefly to describe, what steps can be taken.

Many of my friends have said to me since I put this Motion on the Paper, “But what can England do for the Poles?” I say, first of all, remember that they are there; do not forget them. Secondly, remember what happened 25 years ago.

Just the same thing happened to Belgium, only on a less disastrous scale. But we did not sit with folded hands; we proclaimed to all the world that Belgium was our constant care and that we should not forget Belgium. What is more, arrangements were made — and we may hear something of them in this debate — by which great assistance was given to those unfortunate Belgian people. I have no doubt that the Foreign Office — and especially the Foreign Secretary, whose mind, as we all understand, is deeply moved by this suffering, as any suffering must move him especially — are doing what they can, and we should like to know what it is.

I do not propose to go into any controversial matters to-day at all, but I just want to place on record what I believe all your Lordships will agree to be the fact: that the Poles were not in the least to blame. I go further, and say that we British people are not to blame either. We could not prevent it, and we could not say less than we did when we said: "If you are attacked, you whose integrity has been secured by constant treaties, renewed again and again, we will go to war with those who invade you." We could not say less; we took all risks. Not so much has befallen us as might have done, but we took all risks and we were right. Our consciences are clear in that regard. But if we have a right cause and clean hands, as I think we have, and when that right cause — as I am sure it will — in the end prevails, I plead that neither now nor then shall we forget Poland.

LORD MOYNE (U.): My Lords, I think the noble Lord has been very wise in not going into details as to what should be done at the end of the war. He has taken to heart the moral of the fable, which applies, I may say, to monsters as well as to lions: that you must not divide up the skin before they are dead. I am sure that in this case, as when you meet a venomous snake or mad dog, you have first of all to concentrate on dealing with it before you consider what you will do with the carcass. But it is not premature to begin considering the case of Poland, and how the weaknesses which have landed her in the present tragedy may be avoided in any future settlement,



so that she may emerge stronger and less vulnerable than before.

Germany seems to have given an extraordinarily interesting example in the Baltic as to how weaknesses in these border States can be avoided. She has suggested by her big movements of German population that the interest of the people is much greater in importance than the historical associations of minorities with particular territories. The Germans have shown that they not only specialize in persecuting racial minorities, but they are unwilling themselves ever to live as a peaceful minority under foreign rule. Hitler the other day talked about "racial splinters," and he has taken care for years past to see that those racial splinters were so poisoned that they were bound to cause festering wounds in the bodies politic in which they were planted, and German Colonies have been agents consistently for disorder, and have been made the pretext for German annexation.

The solution, which must as a general principle appeal to a great many of us, is that these German splinters shall be expelled from the surrounding States, and Poland in particular, in exchange for the downtrodden minorities in Germany, such as the 1,500,000 Poles who have been persecuted by the Reich; and, although it is off the point today, it is not too early to begin pondering the problem of the Jews, because I have seen in the tropics lately how impossible it is to find suitable territory for these poor people. And there again, surely, the solution is that, since Germany has shown herself unfit to rule them, she should be made to provide suitable territory where they can live under their own laws.

The noble and gallant Lord's Motion in its wording deals with the suffering and want which exist in all parts of Poland. This is a very urgent problem, but it is one which is peculiarly difficult for Great Britain to deal with, now that Poland has been absorbed in a State with which we are at war; and whatever we do after the war — and surely British generosity and the debt that we owe to Poland for the grand resistance against overwhelming odds will ensure that we do our utmost — whatever be the steps that are taken, they can only take place in

the way of relief within Poland after peace. The condition of Poland is very like what was to be found in Belgium in the late war, and it will, I think, be dealt with best in the same way through the agency of neutrals. It is reassuring to know that already the United States are active in the field. The Society of Friends have taken a great part in immediate steps to try to mitigate the terrible hardships of the Poles who are left homeless, and without resources under this hated German rule.

I am particularly interested in the condition of the Poles who have been driven out of Poland, and there the problem is divided into two classes. They are the combatants, who amount to something over 70,000, who have found refuge mainly in the Balkans, and civilians, who amount to between 55,000 and 60,000, according to the latest figures. The way of dealing with these people may rather differ, but they are both alike in their terrible state of destitution and want. The neighboring Governments have shown great hospitality. They have found roofs to cover these poor people, but they have no resources from which they can substitute for the thin summer clothes in which they fled over the frontier the necessary provision against the Balkan winter, in which the thermometer drops to thirty or forty degrees below zero. There is enormous and pressing need of clothes — greatcoats, blankets, thick underclothes, and suits of clothes in which these people can live through the winter.

The various philanthropic agencies in this country were not slow to do what they could. The Society of Friends, the Save the Children Fund, and various Jewish organizations immediately sent out helpers and assistance in kind, and we have now got, under the lead of the Polish Ambassador, a Central Fund, which is inviting subscriptions, which will be disbursed in money and in kind through the agencies already in the field and, where Governments exist, by special measures. In Hungary the fund which was the origin of the Central Fund, that of the Anglo-Polish Relief Committee, immediately sent out representatives, and has made available a large credit, which is being disbursed locally. The needs of Hungary are very great, and it is difficult to get supplies through quickly, owing to the number of frontiers and the length of transport. But we were

hoping to send off a large consignment at the end of last week, and I hope that difficulties over frontiers and laissez-passers may be got over very quickly. In Rumania the refugees are being very well cared for in the way of cover and food. The Government are giving them 100 lei a day, which is just over a shilling, but they have not got the necessary covering against the climate. The Save the Children Fund is doing admirable work there in opening orphanages, and it has saved from misery and death a great many children by this wonderful effort, which is infinitely more valuable because it has been so prompt.

The Central Fund have sent out a large supply of serum and vaccine to Bucharest, and they are hoping to send out a unit for treatment and survey of the refugee camps in Hungary as soon as we can get the necessary transport. It will be appreciated that the lot of these unfortunate refugees will be infinitely worse if pestilence is added to famine, because then it will be almost impossible to deal with them. There will necessarily be a sanitary cordon round the camps, and it is all-important to immunize them against such a disaster. Just now there are very many appeals, but I am sure the public will show the generosity to this Polish cause that they always do to such heart-rending cases. Incomes have shrunk from war and taxation, and it necessarily is going to be difficult to get money. The Fund has already spent far ahead of its resources. I am told that is common form with charitable appeals, and that hospitals are said never to be efficiently run unless they are in debt. But we hope that the public will quickly come to our rescue and make up our deficit. We feel it is better to spend 1 pound now in covering the naked than 10 pounds next summer when people will not really feel the climate. We hope that the Government are going to assist in bearing the burden. We should like to hear what is being done for the combatants who are interned. We know that they are in barracks, but we gather that they are very ill-provided with covering. I trust that the Foreign Secretary will be able to hold out some hope that the Government will assist in bearing a burden that may prove too heavy for philanthropic effort to bear unaided.

LORD NOEL-BUXTON (L.) : My Lords, I should like to say a word in support of this very cogent appeal because I am connected with one of the bodies which has attempted to deal with the overwhelming need — the Save the Children Fund — following an appeal in *The Times* signed by the most reverend Primate and others some five weeks ago. I should like particularly to support the appeal made by the noble Lord who spoke last that the Government should play their part in diminishing this tragedy. I am very glad the Foreign Secretary has already shown his interest by the appointment of Sir Francis Humphrys to watch over the organization of the relief, but I feel it would be very appropriate for the Government to go further. We are familiar with the generous action which was taken by our Government in the case of the sufferings of Czechoslovakia. In 1920 — perhaps this is a somewhat more comparable case — following on the distresses which succeeded the war, the Government instituted a plan of giving pound for pound of money raised by private effort. In this case the urgency is as extreme as we have ever known, and humane and Christian motives must be keenly aroused by the sufferings which exist, and exist, I feel, in the highest degree. They have been met to some extent by the bodies which the noble Lord, Lord Moyne, has mentioned which exclude from their purview political, religious, or racial bias. I am glad to say that America has already raised very considerable sums as well.

But the Motion proposes that work should be done in Poland itself. One does feel that the German Government ought to allow such efforts as were made in Belgium by the Americans, and on that account we ought in this debate, no doubt, to avoid any political comments upon the situation apart from the urgent need of human relief. Such work as could be done in Poland would have to be done, I suppose, by neutral organizations. I am glad to know that there is some hope of co-operation from international bodies such as the Society of Friends and the Save the Children International Union — of which the Save the Children Fund is a component part — an International Union which has its offices in Geneva. But, at all events, work can be done outside Poland in neutral countries, as we have

just heard, and it ought to be done on a much larger scale than has been made possible by the funds already existing.

I would only in a word like to testify to the good work which is already being done by these several bodies. Speaking from my own personal experience, in Hungary the Save the Children Fund at once sent one of its Hungarian administrators to the districts where the refugees are found near the Polish frontier. Being herself a great educational expert, she has not only done direct relief work in the provision of food and clothing, but is already doing something to establish emergency schools for the great numbers of children who are in need of education if they are to be there for any time, as unhappily they must be. In Rumania, the national Children Fund has been working mainly at Czernowitz, where the largest masses of refugees are found. Here is one striking and compelling fact. Not only are there masses of children, but 500 children have been separated from their parents and are virtually orphans, without a friend, and require, therefore, very special help.

It is deplorably true, as we have just heard, that these children, and adults too, came out of Poland in clothing utterly unfitted for cold weather — very large numbers of them in cotton clothes. Balkan cold is something unknown in this country. If any of your Lordships have not experienced the cold of winter in the Balkans, you do not know what cold is. I would never have imagined, until I experienced it, what cold could be in the East of Europe. It is a very terrible situation with which we are dealing. What can be done about it? Every humane person who can afford to subscribe ought to do so. But I would submit that it is not merely a question of humanity, but to some extent also of national honor and reputation. In 1920 government help was given in the way I have described. Although we were at that time suffering from exhaustion of a long war, yet the Government on a very generous scale gave the equivalent pound for pound of what was privately subscribed. I hope that the Government may at least be willing to act as generously in this case.

THE EARL OF LISTOWEL (Lab.) My Lords, I rise for a very few moments to associate the Labor Party in this House with

the Motion that has been moved by the noble Lord on the Liberal Benches, and to endorse his plea, and the plea repeated by the noble Lord who is the Chairman of the Polish Relief Fund, and, after him, by the noble Lord who is President of the Save the Children Fund, for effective assistance for the Polish refugees. The point I should like, if I may, to emphasize is one that was made towards the end of the speech of my noble friend Lord Noel-Buxton — namely, that this is not a purely humanitarian problem. Most noble Lords would doubtless agree that it would be unfair to ask our Government, in war-time, to respond with the same generosity to appeals for assistance from abroad as they may have shown in peace-time, if the appeals were on purely humanitarian grounds. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Noel-Buxton, that we have a special obligation and responsibility towards the Polish victims of the war, which arises directly out of our alliance with that country and the tremendous events which this alliance has occasioned.

Casting our minds back for a few moments, we remember, that, fortified by the promise of help from Great Britain as well as from France, the Poles boldly rejected the German demands and, when they were attacked for doing so, defended their country with the utmost gallantry for as long as they were able to do so. Owing mainly to their geographical circumstances, the military assistance we rendered our Polish ally did not save it from defeat, at any rate in the first stages of war. Whether we could have done more is a matter that the historian alone, with a full knowledge of the facts, can decide. I am convinced that the Government believed at that time, no doubt still believe, that they were doing everything in their power to hamper the German offensive against Poland. But surely the very fact that the military contribution we made to our Ally's cause was necessarily so meagre renders it incumbent on us to give the maximum of humanitarian assistance. There is, indeed, a very interesting parallel that has been drawn by several noble Lords between the plight of Poland at the present time and the plight of Belgium in 1914. I am sure the Government would find support from all sections of Bri-

tish public opinion if they decided to respond immediately to the appeal that has been voiced on behalf of Polish refugees.

I am very glad that the noble Lord, Lord Mottistone, recast his original Motion, because I think it is now in a form in which it will receive universal support. As has been pointed out by the last two speakers, there are at the present moment thousands of destitute refugees in Rumania and Hungary who require immediate assistance from abroad if they are to survive the rigors of the continental winter without heavy loss of life and without serious damage to their health. I should like — because I heard this report myself last week from the headquarters of the Society of Friends, which sent out an exploratory expedition to Rumama — to endorse the plea that has been made by the two last speakers for ways and means of providing warm clothing and blankets for the refugees, at any rate in Rumania and probably also in Hungary, during the coming months. My information coincides with that of the noble Lord, Lord Moyne, when he said that the Rumanian Government has responded exceedingly generously and were doing all they could to provide food and shelter, but that there was still a very severe dearth in the matter of protective clothing that will be so sorely needed during the coming months.

As I think every speaker has suggested, the primary need is for the money that can purchase these necessities of health and life. I, having a certain amount of experience of voluntary work for refugees, am sadly of the opinion that it will be impossible for voluntary effort to raise the required amount in time. And if, before this war broke out, the Government admitted as they did, that voluntary effort could not cope with the influx of refugees from Germany and Czechoslovakia, how much more readily should they admit now that private purses, drained by war-time demands cannot cope with the fresh influx of refugees who are victims of the war in Eastern Europe. I should like to support the very practical proposal made by my noble friend Lord Noel-Buxton, that the Government might encourage private effort by offering one pound for every pound subscribed. It is clearly undesirable to do anything to damp the humanitarian enthusiasm of the public. At

the same time, I think an offer of that kind would have the effect of stimulating all those whose sympathies were aroused or who felt a keen sense of obligation to give as much as they could possibly afford. That is all I have to say. My excuse for speaking at all is that my Party is very keenly anxious to associate itself with anything that is being done in the way of active assistance for the Poles.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX) : My Lords, it is I think in the nature of things that all your Lordships should have listened with a very wide measure of sympathy to the speeches that have been made in the course of this debate, and not least to the speech of the noble Lord who introduced the subject to our thought and who, I hope, will feel that his Motion has served a useful purpose by giving occasion for the several speeches that followed to be delivered. Every one of those who have taken part in the debate has, I think, had direct special knowledge in one form or another of the problem with which the Motion deals, and I am sure that what has fallen from them will be of real value and assistance to those who have this exceedingly difficult problem to deal with in the first instance. The noble Lord who moved was wise — I naturally think that, because he agreed with me in doing so — to alter the wording of his Motion. But, in whatever form the Motion stands, we can all, I think, welcome it as giving an opportunity to the House to show sympathy with and to command the cause of unhappy Poland, and also to restate the unshakeable determination of His Majesty's Government to do everything that they can to prosecute the cause of the Allies, of whom Poland is one, to a victorious conclusion.

On the actual conditions in Poland, of course, as the noble Lord said, His Majesty's Government have no representatives of their own there, and they have no other direct and reliable means of obtaining information. Therefore, whatever can be done in Poland does fall, as I think my noble friend Lord Moyne said, naturally on to the shoulders of well-disposed neutrals and those who can work under their auspices. But, of course, it is common knowledge that, as a result of the inva-



sion, wide disorganization and destruction and great unhappiness have been caused. It is not necessary to imagine deliberate cruelty — though, I am afraid, unhappy experience does not permit us to dismiss that wholly from our minds — but even without that there is plenty of material for wholesale destitution and suffering. However, as I say, with that immediate problem it is obviously impossible for His Majesty's Government to deal, and one can only hope that some knowledge and consciousness of what the problem involves in terms of human suffering may be present to the minds of the forces now in occupation of Poland.

I am quite sure that neither His Majesty's Government nor the British people are in any danger of being indifferent to the lot of the refugees now living chiefly, as we have been told, in Rumania, in Hungary, in Latvia and in Lithuania. That, naturally enough, was a problem which, as it came into being and was appreciated here, made direct and immediate appeal to many forms of private charity and many organizations dealing with private charity in this country; and it was very soon seen that there was a certain danger of all those manifold agencies that were interesting themselves in the problem falling into a certain discordance and overlapping. It was accordingly with the object of avoiding that danger, if in fact it was a real one, and of ensuring better co-operation between His Majesty's Government, for there are directions in which we can perhaps help directly, and the various private organizations, that Sir Frances Humphrys, to whom reference was made by the noble Lord, Lord Noel-Buxton, was asked to undertake the work of general counsellor, as it were, to the Polish cause, and to act somewhat as a channel of communication between the Polish Ambassador and those working with him in London and the other organizations and the Government Departments, or whoever it might be, and to try to pull the whole thing as much as possible together.

With great public spirit Sir Francis Humphrys at once accepted this obligation, and through him all organizations and individuals who wish to take any hand in this work of refugee relief can obtain easy and ready access to the various Depart-

ments of Government who may in any direction be affected. I am glad to say that he is already in close and, I think, regular touch with a great many of the workers in this cause. I also note (and I dare say my noble friend Lord Moyne will support this) that he has been able to facilitate their work in a variety of ways. It is, of course, obvious that in making money and supplies available for refugee purposes in several of these foreign countries under conditions that are quite exceptional, a good many problems political, financial, and economic are bound to make their presence felt, and it is with the object of trying in part to smooth out those difficulties that we thought it well to enlist the assistance of Sir Francis Humphrys.

It would not be right, and indeed it would not be possible, for me to endeavor to particularize between the various voluntary organizations which have been good enough to interest themselves in this work. I think it is true that almost from the beginning British workers have been on the spot trying to help the refugees, and that has been no small task, as may be measured from the fact that the total number of refugees, including all sorts, amounted to something like 120,000. I think a great many people would say that there were more, and it is quite true, as more than one of those who have spoken have stressed, that as things are it is only too likely that a great many of these will be in dire need as the winter advances. Charitable organizations in the several countries have been doing their best, and I think it is true to say that in general the situation as regards actual food does not give rise to any great measure of anxiety. The real anxiety, I am advised, is in regard to clothing, because these unhappy people had to leave their country during what was, I believe, something like a heat wave, and what we did think a heat wave at the time — and, accordingly, they left insufficiently clad to meet any more severe weather. I can well believe that the need for suitable clothing may prove itself to be beyond the capacity of even the most generous local effort.

The unified Polish Relief Fund Appeal, with which my noble friend Lord Moyne has been good enough to associate himself, has, I am told, made a promising beginning, but, as

he emphasized from his greater knowledge, both expansion of that beginning and speed of the expansion of it are essential, and I hope that his words and the words of all your Lordships and my own will go far beyond your Lordships' House and reach a great many generous hearts outside it. It is indeed fully in accord with our tradition that such help as this to needy people beyond our borders should come primarily from the generosity of private individuals and organizations, and I certainly think it is true that no more deserving cause than this has ever been placed before the consideration of the British public. For all the reasons that have been given, there is no cause that should make a more direct appeal to the British people at this time than this appeal on behalf of the Poles.

The noble Lord who moved the Motion made a reference to other Governments. I have not the exact details before me, but I know the French Government have done in various ways a great deal to help the Polish cause, and, as more than one of your Lordships who spoke said, both the Rumanian Government and the Rumanian people are doing a great deal. Indeed, as I have said, the need is very great, and in regard to this business of warm clothing, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say it is desperate. It is accordingly for that reason that His Majesty's Government have felt — their minds moving much on the lines of those who have spoken this afternoon — that they also, in view of the emergency of it, ought to take some immediate share in the business and make their contribution also to the effort that philanthropy is so widely making. Accordingly, His Majesty's Government have decided to offer an immediate sum of 100,000 pounds to meet this immediate necessity of clothing and medical supplies, which I understand are the most urgent. It is proposed, I am advised by those who deal with these things, that these materials should be purchased forthwith in this country and sent with all possible speed to the refugees in Hungary and in Rumania. In taking that emergency decision the Government, I am quite sure, will have the approval of your Lordships' House and of the great mass of British opinion generally.

So far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, they confidently trust that it will be realized that this advance for urgent needs is an exceptional contribution. I have seen the suggestion, which the noble Lord, Lord Noel-Buxton, repeated this afternoon, that any contribution from His Majesty's Government should be on the basis of pound for pound. There are things to be said in favor of that course, and there are things to be said on the other side. I do not know what view the noble Lord will finally take, but I think he will not be disposed to feel that His Majesty's Government have failed to respond to the main purpose that he and others have principally in mind. But although that be done, the call for private charity will still remain and I am sure British people will not be unmindful, although we all well know the difficulties, of the special appeal that is made to them now by the tragic plight of these tragic people. It is, of course, really a problem that can only be dealt with by international co-operation, and we must endeavor to secure as large a measure of international co-operation in its treatment as we can. But for ourselves and immediately, it is, as I ventured to say at the beginning of my few remarks, at once an obligation of humanity and an evidence of the feeling that this country has for the country from which these unhappy people have been evicted.

LORD MOTTISTONE: My Lords, before we leave this subject and before I withdraw my Motion, I should like to thank the noble Viscount for the sympathetic reference he has made to the Polish people; but I think it falls to be said also that it is still true that for every one of these poor refugees, mothers and children, suffering the extremity of cold and hunger, there must be plenty within Poland itself. While I have accepted the view put forward by the noble Viscount the Foreign Secretary that we cannot ask His Majesty's Government and the French Government to expose themselves to a rebuff by inviting the invading Powers to act in the same way as we are acting, the British and French Governments, I think, might urge the great neutral Powers like the United States of America and Italy, to say the kind of things to the invading Powers that the noble

Viscount has so eloquently said in the cause of humanity, in order to save these poor people from the disaster which has fallen upon them through no fault of their own, and to save not only the refugees but those still in Poland from disaster and death. I beg leave to withdraw.

*Motion for Papers, by leave, withdrawn.*

### 73. SOVIET "PLEBISCITE" IN POLAND

(NOVEMBER 8, 1939)\*

ON OCTOBER 6, 1939, Soviet Army commanders and military councils of the joint occupation forces in Poland announced that an election to the People's Assemblies would take place on Polish territories under Soviet occupation on October 22, 1939. The same authorities published election rules, patterned after those in force in the Soviet Union.

The district of Wilno was not included in this election. Voting was practically compulsory, and thus the final returns showed that 92-96% of the population had voted. The candidates were appointed by the Russian authorities and were, as a rule, persons unknown in the constituency. When it came to polling the name of only one candidate was on the ballot.

The returned candidates formed the two National Assemblies: the "White Ruthenian," which met in Bialystok on October 28; and the "Ukrainian," which met in Lwow on October 26. Both Assemblies passed the following resolutions — not by ballot, but by a show of hands, and unanimously:

1. That "Western White Russia" and "Western Ukraine" pass into the hands of the working class.
2. That "Western White Russia" and "Western Ukraine" be "admitted" to the Soviet Union.
3. That the big estates be confiscated.
4. That the banks and industries be nationalized.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 353, p. 187.

5. *That homage be paid to "the great Stalin."*

*On November 1st and 2nd, 1939 the fifth special session of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. decided to incorporate "Western White Russia" and "Western Ukraine" into the U.S.S.R.*

MR. HANNAH (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the meagre reports in the press about the policy of Russia in Poland east of the Curzon line, he will take steps, so far as it is in the public interest, to publish the information in the possession of his Department on the subject.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): His Majesty's Government have at present little extra information on this subject which could usefully be published, but the hon. Member's request will be borne in mind.

#### 74. POLISH ARMED FORCES. POLISH GOVERNMENT'S POWERS OF COMPULSION OVER NATIONALS RESIDENT IN GREAT BRITAIN.

(NOVEMBER 8, 1939)\*

MR. RHYS DAVIES (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether the Polish Government is exercising any powers of compulsion to require its nationals in this country to join the fighting forces in the present emergency; and whether such nationals are allowed to join His Majesty's forces if they prefer to do so.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The Polish Government have no powers of compulsion over their nationals resident in this country, but Polish law provides for the withdrawal of consular protection and possibly also of Polish citizenship in cases where Polish nationals attempt to evade conscription.

As regards the second part of the question, an Order-in-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 353, p. 229-230.

Council issued on September 28 last provided that an alien may hold a commission or may be entered or enlisted in any of His Majesty's Forces as if he were a British subject. Polish nationals applying for enlistment are, however, encouraged to enlist with the Polish armed forces.

## 75. COMMUNICATION TO LEAGUE OF NATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO GREAT BRITAIN'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR

(NOVEMBER 15, 1939)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister the terms of the communication made to the League of Nations with reference to Great Britain's entry into the war.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): I am circulating the terms of this communication in the Official Report.

Following are the terms of the communication:

Foreign Office, S.W.I.  
9th September, 1939.

Sir,

On the 23rd May last Viscount Halifax made, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, a statement to the Council of the League of Nations concerning the obligations which His Majesty's Government had felt constrained to undertake in pursuit of pacific and well-defined ends. He explained that one principle was common to these obligations, namely, resistance to the imposition of solutions by the method of force, which, if con-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 353, p. 684-685.

tinued, must result in reducing civilization to anarchy and destruction. He added that everything that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had done was in conformity with the spirit of the Covenant.

2. I am now directed by Lord Halifax to state that on the 1st September last the German Government committed an act of aggression against a member of the League of Nations. The action of the German Government was taken in disregard of the obligation, which they had accepted, to solve without recourse to force the questions which might become the cause of division between Germany and Poland; in disregard of the obligations which the German Government had assumed towards Poland and the other signatories of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War of the 27th August, 1928; and in disregard of the appeals which had, on high authority, been addressed to the German Government to seek a solution of Polish-German differences by pacific means.

3. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, in co-operation with the French Government, had exerted their utmost influence to promote a settlement by peaceful negotiation of the matters in dispute between Germany and Poland, and endeavoured, by diplomatic action, to bring the violation of Polish territory by German forces to an end. These endeavours failed, and the action of the German Government called into play the obligations which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had assumed towards Poland. These obligations, which originally resulted from the declaration made by His Majesty's Government on 31st March, 1939, were defined in the Agreement of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland signed in London on the 25th August, 1939.

4. I am, therefore, to inform you that, in conformity with the obligations assumed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and in consequence of the continuance of aggressive action by Germany against Poland, a state of war has existed between the United



Kingdom and Germany since 11 a.m. on the 3rd September, 1939.

5. I am to request that this communication may be transmitted to the members of the League of Nations.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) Alexander Cadogan

The Secretary-General,

League of Nations,

Geneva.

## 76. OFFICIAL VISIT OF POLISH PRIME MINISTER SIKORSKI AND POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER ZA- LESKI TO ENGLAND. TRIBUTE TO THE POLISH NAVY.

(NOVEMBER 16, 1939)\*

EARL STANHOPE: ... Fresh evidence of the close and friendly collaboration between ourselves and our Allies is afforded by the official visit which the Polish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs are now paying to this country. We have been very happy to welcome General Sikorski and to renew our contacts with M. Zaleski, and to discuss with them the measures which are being undertaken to enable detachments of all Polish armed forces to join in the Allied war effort against Germany.\*\* A detachment of the Polish Navy is already giving valuable service in co-operation with the Royal Navy, and we hope that it will be possible to take early steps in consultation with the French Government to organize self-contained Polish military forces for service in France. Such forces will, in addition to their intrinsic military value, be symbolic of the right to independent national existence which it is the purpose of our struggle to vindicate on behalf of the gallant Polish people.

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 114, p. 1845

\*\* See No. 100

## 77. POLISH NATIONALS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THEIR ENLISTMENT IN HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES.

(NOVEMBER 23, 1939)\*

MR. RHYS DAVIES (Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Polish nationals in this country who left their native land during childhood, who know nothing of that country nor understand the Polish language, are informed by his Department that they must secure the consent of the Polish authorities before they can enlist in His Majesty's Forces; and whether he will take steps to allow these men to join either of the Forces in accordance with the principle adopted during 1914-18 in relation to Russian nationals then in this country.

MR. HORE-BELISHA: As was stated by my right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the answer given to the hon. Member on November 8 last,\*\* Polish nationals are liable, under Polish law, to the withdrawal of consular protection, and possibly also of Polish citizenship, if it is considered that they have attempted to evade conscription. It is, therefore, in the interests of Polish nationals to refer to the Polish Consular Authorities before applying to enlist in His Majesty's Forces.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 353, p. 1428

\*\* See No. 74

78. HIS MAJESTY'S SPEECH  
(NOVEMBER 23, 1939)\*

MR. SPEAKER (*standing in the Clerk's place at the Table*):  
I have to acquaint the House that the House has been to the House of Peers, where a Commission under the Great Seal was read. The Lord Chancellor, being one of the Lords Commissioners, delivered His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, in pursuance of His Majesty's Command, as followeth:

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

The shadow of war has once more fallen over Europe.

Despite the efforts of my Government to preserve peace, Germany, in violation of her solemn undertakings, wantonly invaded Poland. This new instance of German aggression and bad faith was a challenge which we could not have declined without dishonor to ourselves and without peril to the cause of freedom and the progress of mankind.

We seek no material gain. Liberty and free institutions are our birthright which we, like our forefathers, are resolved to preserve.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

I thank you for your ready acceptance of the heavy financial burdens rendered necessary as a contribution towards meeting the severe expense of war. So prompt and ungrudging a response has deeply impressed the world and demonstrates the unflinching determination of My people to make every sacrifice necessary for victory.

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House of Commons. Vol. 353, p. 1453-1454.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS :

The issue is clear. With united will My peoples here and overseas have dedicated themselves to the struggle. The spontaneous decision of My Dominions to participate in the conflict and the invaluable help which they are giving, and are about to give, to common cause have been of the greatest encouragement to Me. With the aid of our faithful French and Polish allies we cannot doubt that our cause will prevail.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your labors.

## 79. RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN FINLAND (NOVEMBER 30, 1939)\*

**T**HE CONFLICT BETWEEN *Russia and Finland* continued to grow (See No. 68). On October 31, 1939 Foreign Commissar Molotov made a speech in which he said that Russia not only considered it her right but also her duty to adopt serious measures to strengthen her security. In this speech Mr. Molotov rebuked President Roosevelt for his demarche in the Russian-Finnish conflict (See No. 68) in the following words:

*"In a message to Comrade Kalinin, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, dated October 12, Mr. Roosevelt expressed the hope that friendly and peaceful relations between the U.S.S.R. and Finland would be preserved and developed.*

*"One might think that matters are in better shape between the United States and, let us say, the Philippines or Cuba, who have long been demanding freedom and independence from the United States and cannot get them, than between the Soviet Union and Finland, who has long*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 255-257.

*ago obtained both freedom and political independence from the Soviet Union."*

*On November 3 Finland rejected new Russian demands and offered counter-proposals. "The concessions which Finland agrees to make to the U.S.S.R. in order to improve neighborly relations and ensure peace represent a very heavy sacrifice for the Finnish people, as they affect an area which has been inhabited by a Finnish population since a very ancient date, and which for centuries has formed part of Finland's political territory."*

*On November 9 Finland again refused a military base to Russia.*

*On November 28 Russia denounced the Russo-Finnish Non-Aggression Treaty, and on November 29 Russia broke diplomatic relations with Finland. Finland asked conciliation or arbitration. United States Secretary of State Cordell Hull suggested the good offices of the United States to Russia and Finland.*

*On November 30 Russia invaded Finland.*

MR. ATTLEE (Lab. — *by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister whether he can give the House the latest information regarding the Russo-Finnish situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The House will be aware that for some time past there has been an exchange of views between the Soviet and Finnish Governments on certain questions, mainly of a strategic character, raised by the former. Some apprehension had been expressed by the Soviet Government at the proximity of Leningrad to the Finnish frontier, which is in fact only some 20 miles distant, and a proposal was made by them for the realignment of this part of the frontier in exchange for territorial compensation further North. Claims were also made for the acquisition of certain Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland and of a Finnish port at the entrance to the Gulf, in order, it was stated, to assure the position of the Soviet Union in the Gulf of Finland. A further claim is believed to have been made for the Finnish side of the Rybachi

Peninsula, which overlooks and dominates Finland's sole Arctic port of Petsamo.

The attitude of the Finnish Government was from the outset unprovocative, though governed by their determination to do nothing which would impair their country's sovereign status. It is known that a Finnish note delivered in Moscow immediately before the announcement of the rupture of diplomatic relations was of a most conciliatory character, and the Finnish Government proposed to submit the dispute which had arisen to arbitration, and offered meanwhile to withdraw all troops from the Finnish frontier in the Carelian Isthmus with the exception of ordinary frontier guards and customs forces. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government on Tuesday night denounced the Soviet-Finnish Non-Aggression Pact, which had been expressly designed to ensure the settlement of disputes such as this by peaceful means.

His Majesty's Government have observed these developments with increasing concern and they have found it difficult to believe that strategic measures of such scope and importance as were suggested should have been considered necessary to protect the Soviet Union against a country as small as Finland.

Late last night M. Molotov broadcast a statement in the course of which he is officially reported as having denied the suggestion, which he attributed to the foreign Press, that a Soviet attack on Finland was intended. Yet, only a few hours after this broadcast, it is understood that Soviet forces have invaded Finnish territory on several sections of the frontier and have dropped incendiary bombs on an aerodrome in the neighborhood of Helsingfors. It is later reported that Helsingfors, Viborg and other centers have been bombed, in some cases with loss of life.

His Majesty's Government warmly welcomed the offer of mediation made by the United States Secretary of State, since in their opinion the questions at issue between Finland and the Soviet Union were not of a nature to justify the resort to warlike measures. They deeply regret this fresh attack upon a small independent nation, which must result in fresh suffering and loss of life to innocent people.

MR. ATTLEE: May I ask the Prime Minister whether the Government have received from the Government of the U.S.-S.R. any statement as to the reason for what appears to be an indefensible act of unprovoked aggression?

THE PRIME MINISTER: No, Sir, none at all.

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON (C.): Is it not a fact that the Russo-Finnish Pact was determinable only on six months' notice and could not be determined by immediate notice in the way it has been?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Sir, that was one of the terms of the Pact.

MR. GALLACHER (Com.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his predecessor said that our frontier was the Rhine, and with that conception of strategy in view —

MR. SPEAKER: That is quite a different part of the world.

MR. GALLACHER: I want to ask the Prime Minister whether it is not the case that in the early stages of the negotiations the Finnish Prime Minister, in a declaration, stated that the Soviet proposals did not in any way interfere with the independence and integrity of Finland, and can he say what forces have been in operation since to get the Finns to change their attitude?

THE PRIME MINISTER: A threat to their territory might constitute a complete change.

MR. MCGOVERN (I.L.P.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is not the case that the Finns have threatened to besiege Leningrad and assassinate Stalin?

## 80. POLISH-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS. BRITISH WAR AIMS (NOVEMBER 30, 1939)\*

ON NOVEMBER 20, 1939 the *London Times* published a communiqué about the conversations between Gen. Sikorski and Mr. Benes which contained the following information:

*"After his meeting with Dr. Benes yesterday General*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 292-293, 295, 307, 310, 313.

*Sikorski gave a reception to British, French and American journalists.*

*"In reply to questions by journalists General Sikorski said that his Government made no difference between the seizure of Polish territories by Russia and their seizure by Germany, and that they had no reason to believe that their Allies took a contrary view. He had signed no document with Dr. Benes, but past errors had been repaired, and the two nations would collaborate."*

MR. DALTON (Lab.) : . . . Nor when we speak of our Allies can we forget those two comparatively small Slav nations — compared with the Nazi colossus — the Poles and Czechs, who are now the immediate victims of that atrocious Nazi oppression, as recorded from day to day in the Press. I trust that the closest contact is being kept with the representatives both of Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was, I think, a happy chance, or a happy arrangement, which brought together in London, only a few days ago, General Sikorski, the Polish Prime Minister, and Dr. Benes, now an honored resident of this capital, the only man who deserved high praise for what happened at Munich. It was indeed a happy thing that General Sikorski on his visit here should have met Dr. Benes and that these two proved democrats should have concerted together plans for the resurrection of their countries and the restoration of liberty and democracy in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

I have already referred to the United States in relation to the Soviet aggression against Finland, and I am sure that the offer of the United States Government of their good offices was appreciated wherever men are civilized and sane. I also wish to say that we owe to the United States deep thanks for the amendment of the Neutrality Act, which, as President Roosevelt said, restores the traditional neutrality policy of the United States, although the President himself added, in a pregnant phrase, that "it was impossible that American citizens could today be neutral in thought." . . .

So far as the Poles and the Czechs are concerned, I take it that every hon. Member will agree with me when I say that



a Pole has as much right to a Poland in which to live and that a Czech or a Slovak has as much right to a Czechoslovakia in which to live as a German has to a Germany or an Englishman to an England. I take it that these Slav peoples, with their distinctive civilization and character, are entitled to have just as much sovereignty in the future lay-out of Europe — although, let us hope, every one will have less than in the past — as the French or we claim for ourselves. Therefore, I assume that on this subject, although it is premature to discuss details of frontiers and the like, we would be in agreement with the declaration of the French President.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : . . . The hon. Gentleman referred to our Polish Allies. I can assure him that the recent visit of the Polish Prime Minister accompanied by his Foreign Secretary illustrated the determination of the Poles to help the Allied cause on land, on the sea and in the air; we shall value their cooperation and support. The hon. Gentleman further mentioned the Czechs. He will remember the Press statement which was issued on November 20 to the effect that conversations had already started between the Polish Government and the Czech representative with a view to closer collaboration between those two victims of German aggression. We realize, as do the hon. Gentlemen opposite, the importance of these conversations and we regard them as a happy augury in the relations of these two peoples to whose future we attach so much importance. . .

The hon. Gentleman referred in the concluding part of his speech to our war and peace aims. It is difficult to add to what has been said by the Prime Minister and by the Foreign Secretary on this subject; their speeches have been widely welcomed in this country. In the Debate the other day there was a further demand for a definition of our principles. The best way in which, I think, I can sum up what we are fighting for is to say that we are defending our own way of living, based as it is upon the dignity of the individual and upon the continuation of family life and all that that means. The fact is that we are fighting to preserve the best of Christian civili-

zation. It is only when we contrast our way of living, simple as it may be, with the reign of terror and the police regime of certain other countries that we see the depths and force in our own simplicity. We are fighting to preserve for ourselves the liberty of conscience, liberty of religious worship, and liberty of speech and action. These prizes were won by our forefathers three centuries ago, and it is now a foreign foe which threatens them. They are being defended by every, or almost every, section of opinion in this country.

MR. MANDER (L.) : . . . I desire to make a reference to the very happy relations now existing between the governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia. They have not always been the best of friends, but we are very happy to know that, as a result of conferences recently held, the past is buried, and they have decided to do their utmost to live together on terms of the closest amity and good will. There will be a Polish Army and a Czech Army fighting with us for the same objects. It will be a great encouragement to many people in this country to know that a new Polish Government has been formed, of a thoroughly democratic character, on a national basis, in which all parties are represented, and which possesses, I believe, the same ideals and principles of representative government as we in this country believe in. We must remember that there is in London a Czech Legation, and it may be that the time will come when definite recognition can suitably be given to the Government by which it is accredited.

## 81. RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN FINLAND (DECEMBER 5, 1939)\*

ON DECEMBER 1, 1939 *Russia set up in Terijoki a Finnish Soviet Government headed by Kuusinen, which, on December 2, signed with the U.S.S.R. a Pact of Assistance and Friend-*

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 115, p. 126-128. See also No. 79.

*ship. (This pact settled all the questions which the Soviet Government had tried to impose upon the constitutional Finnish Government). On December 3, Finland appealed to the League of Nations under articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant. On December 4 Russia rejected League proposals for a settlement of the dispute, stating that the "U.S.S.R. is not at War with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish nation with war." The Soviet attack upon the Finns shocked the British people and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Viscount Halifax made a statement about it in the House of Lords on December 5, 1939.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX):... The tale of evil consequence that has flowed from the German example and practice of aggression, as the noble Viscount reminded us, grows. In the last two days we have witnessed what has, as he said, been universally condemned as an inexcusable act of aggression by one of the largest upon one of the smallest but most highly civilized nations of Europe: their open towns bombarded, their women and children mutilated and done to death, on the pretext that a nation of under 4,000,000 had hostile designs against one of 180,000,000. The British people, themselves deeply committed in a struggle against aggression, have I think experienced two deep emotions: they have been profoundly shocked by the circumstances of the Soviet attack, and they have profoundly admired the magnificent resistance of the Finns. It is the case, as the noble Viscount said, that this matter is forming the subject of an appeal to the Council of the League of Nations at the end of this week, to be followed, as I understand, by a meeting of the Assembly on Monday. I can assure him, if it were necessary to do so, that on that occasion His Majesty's Government, by whomsoever represented — and I am afraid I see great difficulties about absentsing myself from this country for so many days — will make their position plain.

There are two comments that I would make on this unhappy extension of the conflict, and the first is this. The Russian attack on Finland seems to me to be a direct consequence

of German policy. By the agreement which he thought would give him a free hand to attack Poland, it would seem that Herr Hitler bartered what was not his property to barter: the liberties of the Baltic people. The sequence of events has shown how wide is the damage once the flood-gates are opened. I know that historical parallels can often be pushed too far, but your Lordships will perhaps forgive me if I remind you of the famous passage in which Lord Macaulay condemns the action of Frederick the Great, because it is not without significance today:

“Till he (Frederick the Great) began the war, it seemed possible even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. . . . To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust was no light matter. . . . England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace, but the selfish rapacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbors. The whole world sprang to arms. . . . The evils produced by his wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown, and in order that he might rob a neighbor whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.”

That is not quite irrelevant to the passage of events today.

Earlier in the year we had tried to improve our relations with Russia, but in doing so we had always maintained the position that rights of third parties must remain intact and be unaffected by our negotiations. Events have shown that the judgment and the instinct of His Majesty's Government in refusing agreement with the Soviet Government on the terms of formulæ covering cases of indirect aggression on the Baltic States were right. For it is now plain that these formulæ might well have been the cloak of ulterior designs. I have little doubt that the people of this country would prefer to face difficulties and embarrassment rather than feel that we had compromised the honor of this country and of the Commonwealth on such issues.

## 82. ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT AND RUSSIA (DECEMBER 6, 1939)\*

ON NOVEMBER 20, 1939 the *London Times* published an interview with General Sikorski which included the following statement:

*"In reply to questions by journalists General Sikorski said that his Government made no difference between the seizure of Polish territories by Russia and their seizure by Germany, and that they had no reason to believe that their Allies took a contrary view.\*\**

Concerning this matter the Polish author and writer, former Minister of Finance, I. Matuszewski wrote in his book *"Great Britain's Obligations Towards Poland"* (New York, 1945, p. 36):

*"I understood from General Sikorski, who spoke with me about the matter late in 1939, that as a result of the diplomatic talks and correspondence that followed,\*\*\* the British Government, early in November, returned to its earlier position, namely, that the understanding with Poland guaranteed assistance against aggression from East and West alike."*

*The question of whether the Anglo-Polish Agreement refers only to aggression by Germany or if its intent is to protect all Polish boundaries has twice been submitted in Parliament. (See No. 66 and 68)*

MR. PRITT (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether the statement by General Sikorski, the Prime Minister of Poland, that his Government made no difference between the seizure

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 657.

\*\* See also No. 80.

\*\*\* The declaration of Mr. Butler made in House of Commons on October 19, 1939. (See No. 66.).

of Polish territories by Russia and their seizure by Germany and that they had no reason to believe that their Allies took a contrary view, is in accord with the policy of His Majesty's Government.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The views of His Majesty's Government about the invasion of Poland have already been stated to the House, and there can be no difference of opinion about an unprovoked attack followed by the seizure of the territory of another State.

### 83. TRIBUTE TO THE POLISH NAVY

(DECEMBER 6, 1939) \*

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR. CHURCHILL) : . . . We should have to go back to the Hundred Years War in order to provide sufficient time and scope for inroads of this degree to make any serious impression upon the scale of our mercantile marine. For every 1,000 tons of British shipping sunk 110,000 tons have entered or left the ports of this threatened island, which, we are told, upon the enemy's authority, is beleaguered and beset on all sides, in the first three months of war. In the month of November, nearly a quarter of a million tons of our shipping entered or cleared from our harbors for every 1,000 tons lost, a proportion of 250 to one. When from day to day we read in the papers of the losses, which are always advertised and often placarded, and one notices "another ship sunk," "four ships reported sunk" and items like that, it is necessary to correct our passing impressions by reference to the broad underlying facts which govern the situation.

If the House feels that these facts are reassuring and worthy of acknowledgment, their debt is due to the officers and men of the Royal Navy and of the Merchant Service, and also, in increasing measure, to their comrades of the Royal Air

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 694-695, 699.

Force, as well as to our Allies, the French, about whom I spoke on the last occasion, and to the small though highly efficient Polish flotillas which have lent us their aid.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.): . . . Let me also echo the tribute which the First Lord paid to the work of our gallant French and Polish Allies, and express the hope that co-operation will become ever closer. I am sure the House was particularly struck by the figures which the First Lord gave of the relative losses of neutral and Allied shipping. It is a very remarkable fact that the weight of the German attack has been flung so strongly against neutral shipping, and it is to be hoped that the neutrals will learn the lesson which the First Lord's review suggested, namely, that it would be wise for them to accept the hospitality and protection of the British convoy system.

#### 84. ENLISTMENT IN THE POLISH ARMED FORCES OF POLISH NATIONALS RESIDENT IN GREAT BRITAIN (DECEMBER 12, 1939)

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the beating-up the 40 Polish Jews who have joined the Polish Army in France, he will consider allowing Polish Jews in this country to join the British Army instead of compelling them to go to France to join the Polish Army raised in that country.

SIR V. WARRENDER (Financial Secretary of War Office): As was stated by my right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in reply to a question on November 8 last, the Polish Government have no powers of compulsion over their nationals resident in this country, but Polish law provides for the withdrawal of con-

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<sup>4</sup> House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 1048. See also No. 74.

sular protection and possibly also of Polish citizenship in cases where Polish nationals attempt to evade conscription.

Subject to the risk of these penalties, Polish nationals are eligible, equally with other aliens, for enlistment in the British Army. The statement made in the question has been authoritatively denied.

## 85. POLISH AIR FORCE IN GREAT BRITAIN (DECEMBER 13, 1939)\*\*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR (SIR KINGSLEY WOOD):...  
I am also glad to be able to inform the House that arrangements have been made under which certain Polish squadrons will be re-formed in this country under the command of Polish officers. These squadrons will be attached to the Royal Air Force, and will in due course take their place in the front line. The first detachment of Polish airmen has already arrived.

## 86. LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND POLAND (DECEMBER 13, 1939)\*\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister what action was taken in speech or resolution at the meetings of the Council and Assembly of the League of Nations with reference to German aggression against Poland in breach of the Covenant in the light of Article 17; and whether he will report generally on the result of the meetings.

THE PRIME MINISTER: So far as I am aware, no opportunity has yet arisen for this matter to be touched on. As regards the second part of the question, I hope to make a statement tomorrow.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 1071.

\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 1176.



## 87. RUSSIAN ATTACK ON FINLAND (DECEMBER 14, 1939)\*

**A**S THE RUSSO-FINNISH war continued (See No. 81), Finland submitted on December 9, 1939 an aide-memoir to the League of Nations, and on December 10 she appealed to all civilized nations for help. On December 11, 1939 she appealed to the League for concrete help: "...demonstrations of friendship, marks of encouragement, and the passing of judgment of the aggression are not enough. To be able to stand up against this treacherous aggression, the Finnish people have need of every possible practical support and assistance, and not merely of words of encouragement. The world's tears of indignation have gone to our hearts; Finland herself has shed tears enough in these last days. But we cannot protect the Finnish people from the bullets, the bombs, the shrapnels, and the gas of the aggressor by international resolutions." On December 12, 1939 Russia again rejected a League appeal for armistice and mediation.

The case of Finland was presented to the League of Nations on December 14, 1939. On that day the Assembly adopted the following resolution:

The Assembly:

### I

Whereas, by the aggression which it has committed against Finland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has failed to observe, not only its special agreements with Finland, but also Article 12 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris;

And whereas, immediately before committing that aggression, it denounced, without legal justification, the

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 355, p. 1337-1346

*Treaty of Non-Aggression which it had concluded with Finland in 1932, and which was to remain in force until the end of 1945:*

*Solemnly condemns the action taken by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against the State of Finland;*

*Urgently appeals to every Member of the League to provide Finland with such material and humanitarian assistance as may be in its power, and to refrain from any action which might weaken Finland's power of resistance;*

*Authorizes the Secretary-General to lend the aid of his technical services in the organization of the aforesaid assistance to Finland;*

*And likewise authorizes the Secretary-General, in virtue of the Assembly resolution of October 4, 1937, to consult non-member States with a view to possible co-operation.*

## II

*Whereas, notwithstanding an invitation extended to it on two occasions, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has refused to be present at the examination of its dispute with Finland before the Council and the Assembly;*

*And whereas, by thus refusing to recognize the duty of the Council and the Assembly as regards the execution of Article 15 of the Covenant, it has failed to observe one of the League's most essential covenants for the safeguarding of peace and the security of nations.*

*And whereas it has vainly attempted to justify its refusal on the ground of the relations which it has established with an alleged Government which is neither de jure nor de facto the Government recognized by the people of Finland in accordance with the free working of their institutions;*

*And whereas the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has not merely violated a covenant of the League, but has by its own action placed itself outside the Covenant;*

*And whereas the Council is competent under Article 16 of the Covenant to consider what consequences should follow from this situation:*

*Recommends the Council to pronounce upon the question.*

*Immediately afterwards the Council of the League of Nations adopted this resolution:*

*The Council,*

*Having taken cognizance of the resolution adopted by the Assembly on December 14, 1939, regarding the appeal of the Finnish Government,*

*1. associates itself with the condemnation by the Assembly of the action of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against the Finnish State, and*

*2. for reasons set forth in the resolution of the Assembly, in virtue of article 16, paragraph 4, of the Covenant, finds, that, by its act, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has placed itself outside the League of Nations. It follows that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is no longer a Member of the League.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): A fortnight ago, on the day when the first attack was launched on Finland by Soviet forces, I gave the House some account of the circumstances which had led up to this attack.\* Since then the Finns have been defending their country with the courage and determination which were to be expected of that gallant people, and it is clear that the Finnish Army has proved itself by far the better fighting force in everything but numbers. It is too soon to attempt any forecast of the outcome of this unequal struggle, but its political consequences have already been far-reaching. By their act of aggression the Soviet Government have outraged the conscience of the whole world. The German Government, however, have publicly ranged themselves on the side of the aggressor, whom they have even attempted to assist by an insolent and violent campaign against the other Scandina-

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\* See No. 79.

vian countries for their moral support of the Finnish cause.

As the House will be aware, it was generally agreed during the deliberations at Geneva in September of last year that each member of the League should decide for itself, in the light of its own position and conscience, on the nature of the sanctions which it could apply under Article 16 of the Covenant against an aggressor State. His Majesty's Government, for their part, have always held the view that no member State ought to remain indifferent to a clear case of aggression of the sort with which we are now faced. At the outset of the attack on Finland, and before the question had been raised at Geneva, they decided to permit the release and immediate delivery to Finland by the manufacturers concerned of a number of fighter aircraft of which the Finnish Government stood in urgent need; and they intend similarly to release other material which will be of assistance to the Finnish Government. Generous help for Finland has been forthcoming from several other countries, including the United States. It is known that several European countries have recently supplied war material to Finland, and would have supplied more but for the fact that the German Government made difficulties in regard to transit.

As a result of Finland's appeal to the League of Nations, the dispute is now under consideration at Geneva, and the House will not expect me to speak at length on this aspect of the question while the deliberations of the Council and Assembly are proceeding. The attitude of His Majesty's Government has already been made abundantly clear; while strongly condemning the Soviet aggression, they considered that every effort should be made to utilize the League machinery for its primary purpose, namely, the peaceful settlement of the dispute, and, if that should prove impossible, for affording practical assistance to the victim of aggression.

The Council of the League of Nations was summoned to meet on December 9 to consider the appeal by the Finnish Government, under Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant, against the attack upon Finland by the armed forces of the Soviet Union. The Finnish representative, in accordance with his rights under Article 15, paragraph 9, of the Covenant, request-

ed the Council to refer the dispute between his Government and the Soviet Union to the Assembly without delay. The Council acceded to this request.

The Assembly of the League of Nations had been summoned to meet on December 11. The Norwegian delegate was elected President and, as soon as the necessary preliminaries had been completed, a special committee was appointed to examine the Finnish appeal. After the Assembly had heard a most moving statement by the Finnish delegate, this committee held its first meeting, and decided to send an urgent appeal to the Soviet Government and the Finnish Government to cease hostilities and open immediate negotiations under the mediation of the committee with a view to restoring peace. The Soviet Government were informed that Finland, which was present at the meeting, accepted this appeal.

The Soviet Government replied on December 12 that they were unable to accept the invitation to take part in the discussion of the Finnish question at Geneva for reasons which they had already stated in a communication of December 4. The reasons then given were *inter alia* that the Soviet Union was not at war with Finland and did not threaten the Finnish nation with war; that the Soviet Union maintained peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland, whose Government on December 2 had signed with the Soviet Union a pact of assistance and friendship; and that the persons on whose behalf the Finnish delegate, M. Holsti, had approached the League could not be regarded as mandatories of the Finnish people. On December 13 the Assembly held a further meeting to hear a statement by the Argentine delegate to the effect that if in the circumstances the Soviet Union remained a member of the League of Nations, the Argentine Government would be obliged to withdraw from it. In the meantime, the special committee of the Assembly had been preparing a report setting out the facts and circumstances of the case. This committee has now made a report and presented a draft resolution to the Assembly, which is at this moment considering it.

It would clearly be inappropriate to enlarge on the terms

of a resolution which has not yet been adopted, but in general the draft expresses strong condemnation of the action of the Soviet Union and proposes the organization of assistance to Finland with, if possible, the co-operation of States which are not members of the League. The second part of the resolution, after describing the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to attend the League and to observe one of its most essential covenants, goes on to say that the U.S.S.R. has thereby placed itself outside the Covenant and invites the Council to pronounce upon the question of expulsion. It will be appreciated that the League has handled the appeal of Finland with the utmost speed and dispatch.

I should like, further, to say a few words about the bearing of the Finnish conflict upon our war aims. The opportunity provided by this conflict has been eagerly seized upon by the German propaganda machine, and by many people acting consciously or unconsciously in its service, to deflect attention from the primary objective of the Allied war effort, which is the defeat of Nazi Germany. We must never lose sight of that objective. We must never forget that it was German aggression which paved the way for the Soviet attack on Poland and Finland, and that Germany, alone among the nations, is even now abetting by word and deed the Russian aggressor. We must all give what help and support we can spare to the latest victim of these destructive forces; but meanwhile it is only by concentrating on our task of resistance to German aggression, and thus attacking the evil at its root, that we can hope to save the nations of Europe from the fate which must otherwise overtake them.

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.): . . . The Prime Minister has given us some account of what is occurring at Geneva in the League of Nations. On this side we are opposed to aggression whoever is the aggressor, and we see nothing whatever that can condone this gross attack on Finland. While we are anxious that all possible help that can be given should be given by other nations to the Finnish people, I cannot help contrasting the speed with which the League has worked in this case with the slowness

with which it has worked in others. If the same activity by the British Government and by other League States had been shown in previous acts of aggression, we should not, in my opinion, have been at war today.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (L.) : . . . In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister condemned the aggression of Russia upon Finland. I want to say that my friends and I equally condemn aggression by whomever it is done. We have consistently condemned the many instances of aggression which have occurred in the last few years, and we condemn, no less forcibly and no less wholeheartedly, the aggression of which Finland has been the victim. If the Prime Minister will allow me to say so, we welcome the note of warmth, which has been lacking in some of his recent remarks in regard to the League of Nations, to which he returned this morning. The Government, apparently, have re-discovered the League of Nations and have shown their awareness of its still existing moral authority in the world. We rejoice that they have done so, and we believe that Finland was well guided in making her appeal to the League.

At the same time, I very strongly agree with the Prime Minister that our prime object at the moment must be the defeat of Nazi Germany. We must never allow ourselves to forget what a gigantic enterprise that is, and we must never allow the people of this country to forget it. If, therefore, His Majesty's Government have to follow a policy of non-intervention in Finland we hope that they will pursue it energetically and as vigorously as circumstances permit, and we shall give our full support to the Government in lending such help as they can to the Finnish people in their brave struggle to defend themselves against a powerful aggressor.

88. STATES TO WHICH GREAT BRITAIN GAVE  
GUARANTEES AGAINST AGGRESSION  
(JANUARY 17, 1940) \*

MR. EDE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will give the names of any States who have, since September 30, 1938, asked Great Britain to guarantee them against aggression and have been refused.

THE PRIME MINISTER: None, Sir.

MR. EDE asked the Prime Minister which States have been given guarantees by this country of assistance against aggression; in which cases is the aggressor defined; and in which cases is the guarantee against aggression by any other State.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The obligations of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in this respect relate to the following countries and derive from the following instruments, all of which have been published, and to the terms of which I would refer the hon. Member.

France — The Treaty of Locarno of October 16, 1925, reaffirmed in the arrangements drawn up in London on March 19, 1936. The attitude of His Majesty's Government towards France was further defined in my statement to the House on February 6, 1939.

Belgium — The Treaty of Locarno of October 16, 1925 reaffirmed in the arrangements drawn up in London on March 19, 1936 and the Anglo-French Declaration to Belgium of April 24, 1937.

Portugal — The various Anglo-Portuguese Treaties and Agreements, a comprehensive list of which will be found in the answer given to the hon. Member for Bas-setlaw (Mr. Bellenger) on April 13, 1938.

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\* House of Commons, Vol. 356, p. 104.



Iraq — The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance of June 30, 1930.

Egypt — The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance of August 26, 1936.

Greece and Rumania — My statement in the House on April 13, 1939.\*

Poland — The Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance of August 25, 1939,\*\* and the answer given to the hon. Member for the Combined English Universities (Mr. Harvey) on October 19, 1939.\*\*\*

Turkey — The Treaty of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom, France and Turkey of October 19, 1939.

## 89. GERMAN ATROCITIES IN POLAND (JANUARY 25, 1940)\*\*\*\*

CAPTAIN PLUGGE (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the shooting of children in Poland by the Germans; and whether he can make any statement on the subject.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): Yes, Sir. A report of the execution of 136 students, some of whom are said to have been as young as 12 or 13 years old, was contained in a memorandum on conditions in German-occupied Poland communicated by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Ambassador at Angers.

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\* See No. 8.

\*\* See No. 44.

\*\*\* See No. 66.

\*\*\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 356, p. 819.

## 90. WAR AIMS (JANUARY 31, 1940)

MR. HANNAH (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether in view of Dr. Goebbels' official declaration that the Allies do not conceal that it is their goal to bring Germany down, to dismember and divide her as a nation, he will take further steps to make known to the German people, and the world in general, the reasons for our entry into the war and our peace aims.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The reasons for our entry into the war and the purposes for which we are fighting have been frequently stated by the Prime Minister and the other members of His Majesty's Government. I would refer my hon. Friend, in particular, to the Prime Minister's speech at the Mansion House on January 9\*\* and to a speech by my noble Friend, the Secretary of

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\*House of Commons. Vol. 356, p. 1115.

\*\*The speech of Mr. Chamberlain at Mansion House (January 9, 1940).

"... Now it is the turn of Finland to be attacked by the Power with whom Germany made an unholy pact and to whom she set the example of aggression. Finland today, amidst her snows and her frozen lakes, is fighting against the forces of unscrupulous violence just as we are ourselves (cheers). She is fighting for the same thing, for liberty and for justice, and her marvelous successes fill us with admiration for her heroism (cheers).

... It is becoming increasingly clear that the German Government had long planned the successive stages of a program of conquest, and that its appetite grows by what it feeds upon. Today the members of that Government do not hesitate to say their desire to achieve the ruin of the British Empire; no doubt they would rejoice if they could treat us as they are treating the victims who are already within their grasp. We on our side have no such vindictive designs (cheers). To put it about that the Allies desire the annihilation of German people is a fantastic and malicious invention which can only be put forward for home consumption.

On the other hand, German people must realize that the responsibility for the prolongation of this war and of the suffering it may bring in the coming year is theirs — (cheers) — as well as that of the tyrants who stand over them. They must realize that the desire of the Allies for

State for Foreign Affairs, at Leeds on January 20,\* which show that Dr. Goebbels' declaration is a fantastic and malicious invention which could only be put forward for home consumption.

## 91. WAR AIMS

(FEBRUARY 7, 1940)\*†

MR. DUNCAN (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether, without prejudice to the ultimate peace settlement, he will state now, that those parts of Poland, ethnographically Polish, from which Poles are being cruelly removed, will be effectively repopulated by those Poles who wish to return to their homes when the war is won.

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an essentially human, just, Christian settlement cannot be satisfied by assurances which experience has proved to be worthless. The methods that are pursued by the Government of Hitler are a standing threat of the independence of every small State in Europe. They are a constant menace to the moral standards on which the whole of western civilization is founded. . ."

\* The speech of Lord Halifax in Leeds (January 20, 1940).

"... Look at what is happening in regard to Finland. Germany assisted Finland to obtain her independence in 1918 and had been on the most friendly terms and relations with her ever since. Now the independence of Finland is threatened by brutal and totally unprovoked aggression for which Germany, by one of the most cynical and acrobatic feats known to political history, which has brought new danger to European society, must bear her own share — and it is a heavy share — of blame. . .

... What kind of peace is it which we aim? Our peace aims — as distinct from our war aim, which is to win the war — have been clearly defined by the Prime Minister. We must insist upon the restoration of liberty to the small nations which Germany has cruelly deprived of it and, profiting as I hope by the experience of the past, we shall do our utmost to secure Europe from a repetition of this disaster.

We seek nothing for ourselves. We have said publicly that if we can once again feel security that the German Government would respect its undertakings and honestly cooperate in trying to build instead of to destroy European peace, upon the terms of life for all nations, we should not seek any vindictive peace or one which would deny Germany her rightful place among the nations."

† House of Commons. Vol. 357, p. 186.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : It has already been stated on behalf of His Majesty's Government that one of the objects for which we are fighting is to vindicate the right of the Polish people to independent national existence, and to right the wrongs which have been done to them. I cannot make any more explicit statement at present.

MR. DUNCAN : Will my right hon. Friend see that that statement gets the utmost publicity in Germany, in view of the fact that is was reported in the Press that 100,000 families are about to be imported into Poland from Baden and Wurtemberg?

MR. BUTLER : I will certainly do my best to meet my hon. Friend's wishes.

## 92. POLISH GOVERNMENT AND THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL (FEBRUARY 28, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether it is proposed that the Polish Government shall participate in meetings of the Supreme War Council.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : It has been agreed that a Polish officer should be appointed to collaborate with the appropriate Anglo-French military authorities when questions affecting the employment of the Polish Forces are under consideration. The Polish Government have nominated an officer for this purpose.

MR. MANDER : Would it not be in accordance with the spirit of the Anglo-Polish Treaty that there should be the closest possible co-operation and co-ordination at all meetings held between the Allies?

MR. BUTLER : I am glad to say that this arrangement has

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 357. p. 2035.

been made in consultation with the Polish Government and has their approval.

MR. LEACH (Lab.): May I ask when this Government was elected, where and when it sits, and what legislation it is passing?

### 93. WAR AIMS (FEBRUARY 28, 1940)\*

**T**HE DISCUSSION OF *war aims in the House of Commons on January 31 and February 7, 1940 (See Nos. 90 and 91) was continued on February 28, 1940.*

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will make it clear that, although it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to restore the Polish and Czech territories, it is not their policy to partition Germany, in view of official German propaganda alleging that such is the policy of His Majesty's Government?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): I would refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Bilston (Mr. Hannah) on January 31,\*\* which characterized such propaganda as "fantastic and malicious".

MR. HENDERSON asked the Prime Minister whether, with a view to maintaining peace in Europe, it is the policy of His Majesty's Government that the peace conference which will be held at the termination of the present war, should hear the representatives of any European Government which desires to place its national grievances before the conference.

MR. BUTLER: I would refer the hon. and learned Member to the Prime Minister's speech at Birmingham on February

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 357, p. 2036.

\*\* See No. 90.

24,\* in which he made it clear that we and our French allies could not and would not wish alone to settle the new Europe.

MR. HENDERSON: Arising from that answer, is it the intention of the Government to allow any European Government which desires to be at the conference to put forward its national grievances?

MR. BUTLER: I am sure that any such settlement will be comprehensive in scope. The fact that we do not want to settle alone should reassure the hon. and learned Member.

## 94. ANGLO-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS

(WHITE PAPER)

MARCH 6, 1940)\*\*

THE MATTER OF *publishing a White Paper about the Anglo-Soviet negotiations of the Spring and Summer of 1939, often raised many questions in the House of Commons. In the beginning the British Government promised to publish the de-*

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\* Prime Minister Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham, February 24, 1940.

"... We are fighting against German domination of the world. That is the challenge that we have taken up. But we do not desire the destruction of any people. We are fighting to secure that the small nations of Europe shall henceforth live in security, freed from the constant threat of aggression against their independence and the extermination of their people, but we do not want domination for ourselves, nor do we covet the territory of anybody else. We are fighting to right the wrongs that Germany has inflicted on people who once were free: we believe we can achieve that aim, we know it can be secured without putting other peoples in bondage.

We are fighting for the freedom of individual conscience and for the freedom of religion; we are fighting against persecution wherever it may be found. Lastly, we are fighting to abolish the spirit of militarism and the accumulation of armaments which is pauperizing Europe, and not least Germany herself. Only by the abolition of that spirit and those armaments can Europe be saved from bankruptcy and ruin.

How in concrete terms are these aims to be secured? First of all, the independence of the Poles and Czechs must be restored. Secondly, we must have tangible evidence to satisfy us that pledges of assurances when they are given will be fulfilled. Under the present Government of Germany there can be no security for the future. . ."

\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 358, p. 356-357.

*velopment of these negotiations in the form of a White Paper; later, however, they abandoned the idea of publishing these documents.*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he is now able to state the result of his consultations with the French Government on the subject of the publication of a White Paper on the Anglo-Soviet negotiations; and whether, in view of the fact that this was promised on December 13, he can now name a date for issue.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): Further consultations have now taken place with the French Government, and, in agreement with them, we have reached a decision not to publish these documents at present.

MR. MANDER: Is it the intention to publish them at a later date?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I will confine myself to saying that it is not our intention to publish them at present.

MR. KIRKWOOD (Lab.): Would these documents be detrimental to Britain or to Russia?

MR. MANDER: In view of the fact that the Prime Minister gave a definite promise before Christmas that the White Paper would be published, why was it necessary to go back on that decision?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Because we have reviewed the question since, and, in the light of joint considerations, we have changed our minds.

## 95. SOVIET OCCUPATION OF POLAND

(MARCH 13, 1940)\*

MR. HANNAH (C.) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make any statement about present conditions in the provinces of Poland occupied by Russian troops.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 358, p. 1160.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): My hon. Friend will appreciate that information about conditions in this area is necessarily difficult to confirm. Such reports as have reached His Majesty's Government indicate, however, that, as a result of the Soviet occupation, they are gradually approximating to the conditions generally prevailing in the Soviet Union.

MR. KIRKWOOD (Lab.): Would the right hon. Gentleman not tell this House that in our own country conditions are not so ideal that we can criticize the conditions of the working classes in every country under the sun?

MR. BUTLER: Certainly, conditions are better here.

## 96. DEPORTATION OF POLISH CHILDREN TO GERMANY (MARCH 18, 1940)\*

MR. THORNE (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any information as to how many Polish children have been taken away from the various parts of Poland under German control; and the manner in which this has been done.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): Exact figures are difficult to secure in present circumstances. Children are, however, included among the Polish population now being systematically deported from their homes by the German Government and it is clear that this process is being carried out with the brutality which we associate with German activity in Poland.

MR. THORNE: May I ask the Under Secretary of State whether he saw the leading article in the "Manchester Guardian" last week about the inhuman way in which these children are being treated?

MR. BUTLER: Yes, Sir, and I read it with regret.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 358, p. 1616.



## 97. FALL OF FINLAND (MARCH 19, 1940)\*

ON FEBRUARY 11, 1940 a Russo-German Commercial Agreement was signed and on February 19 the U. S. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, announced that the embargo of December 20, 1939 had been extended to Russia.

During the more than three months of resisting the Soviet attacks, Finland received insignificant help in war materials from the Allies. On February 5, the Supreme War Council decided to send to Finland an expeditionary force of 100,000 men. At the beginning of March however, both Sweden and Norway, maintaining their position of strict neutrality, would not agree to allow this army to pass through their territories.

Finland, not being able to fight any longer, began to negotiate for peace. A Peace Treaty was signed between Russia and Finland in Moscow on March 12, 1940. In accordance with this treaty Finland gave up to Russia: in the north, Petsamo, the Rybachi Peninsula, and the region of Kuolajaervi; and, in the south, the strategic islands on the Gulf of Finland, the Karelian Isthmus, including Viipuri (Viborg), and a strip to the north of Lake Ladoga. Hangoe was leased to Russia for 30 years. Furthermore, Finland had to grant Russia facility of transportation between Russia and Norway in the region of Petsamo, and between Russia and Sweden by the shortest railway route.

These hard peace stipulations forced upon Finland by Russia, found their expression in the House of Commons and the House of Lords speeches of March 19, 1940.

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons, Vol. 358, p. 1833, 1920  
House of Lords, Vol. 115, p. 916-917, 922, 936

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): . . . The collapse of the Finnish resistance caused a profound shock throughout the world. Once again we were compelled to see another small state the victim of that policy of aggression which she had taken up arms to resist. It was, of course, only to be expected that German propaganda would exploit this event in order to remove responsibility from themselves and to throw it upon others, but she cannot escape her responsibility. Finland would never have been invaded if it had not been for the Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, and it was only German threats which terrified the Scandinavian countries into withholding the help which might, perhaps, have saved her. . . .

COMMANDER SIR ARCHIBALD SOUTHBY (C.): I presume that when the hon. Member\* speaks of lasting peace he means a Russian peace. I do not propose to follow him in everything he has said, but he referred to the question of Spain. However much we may have differed from one another in this House one thing remains, and that is that over the bodies of 1,000,000 dead Spaniards, Germany and Russia shook hands. The hon. Member talked of betrayal, but Russia has done nothing else but betray everyone who has come into contact with her for the last 20 years. She betrayed Poland by stabbing her in the back when she was fighting for her life with Germany, and she betrayed Finland. I remember that at a meeting on January 12 this year the hon. Member approved the action of the Soviet Government in Finland. Presumably he approves the bombing of men, women and children in Finland. Therefore, it does not lie in his mouth to criticize anybody in this House. The hon. Member sits with a party to which fortunately he does not belong, and which at any rate does view Russia in its true light. The hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Grenfell) stated in October, 1939:\*\*

“I know what Russia has done. It has been a most despicable act. We say in this country that kicking a man

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\* Mr. Gallacher.

\*\* See No. 57.

when he is down is the act of a coward. Russia stepped in and kicked Poland when she was prostrate and shook hands with the aggressor. There is no word for it. I do not know what Russia proposes to do in future, but I am sure it does not reduce the crime against Poland by one iota because they have been two aggressors instead of one."

Another individual, who is, I understand, associated with the hon. Member in his Communistic ideas, Mr. Harold Laski, writing in the "Tribune" on March 11, 1938, said:

"In the classic sense of absolute liberalism, freedom does not exist in the Soviet Union. There is no liberty to criticize the fundamentals of the regime. There is no liberty to found parties to oust the Communist leaders."

It is only because of the freedom which exists in this country that the hon. Member is allowed to stand up and make the criticisms he has made today...

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

VISCOUNT SAMUEL (L.): ... (Finland), the nation which evoked all our sympathies has been defeated; the nation which is the ally of our enemies has been victorious; the State which the League of Nations declared to be the victim of aggression, and on whose behalf it invoked the support of the whole world, has been cast down; the State which was stigmatized as an aggressor and expelled from the League has been triumphant, though indeed at immense cost...

... The responsibility for all these events rests primarily, of course, on Russia. Russia, whose Soviet Government has for decades spoken always in the language of humanitarianism and preached international duty, has now been guilty of one of the greatest international crimes known to history. But let it be remembered also that Germany shares the moral responsibility for these events, for they would not have been possible if Germany by invading Poland had not precipitated a European war... If, therefore, Russia is chief criminal in these events Germany must be stigmatized as an active accessory.

LORD DAVIES (L.): . . . Finland's cause, after all, was our cause. This is what the Prime Minister said in his speech at the Mansion House:

"Finland today is fighting against the forces of unscrupulous violence just as we are ourselves. She is fighting for the same thing, for liberty and for justice. While her need calls for our sympathy and our aid, that valiant people can rest assured that our response to that resolution which was passed so recently at the meeting of the League in Geneva will be no mere formality."

The cause of Czechoslovakia is our cause, and the cause of Poland is also our cause. They have contended for what the Prime Minister described as "the same thing". Their Armies were our Armies; our Armies were theirs. At Munich, however, we lost forty divisions of the best equipped troops of Europe before a blow had been struck. Last September the Polish Army was destroyed while we looked on, apparently unable to render the slightest assistance. Today we have lost the co-operation of an Army of approximately 400,000 men whose heroism and valor under the leadership of Marshal Mannerheim has inscribed a new page in military history and will never be forgotten. . .

LORD PHILLIMORE: . . . I would like to finish my speech by asking the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the same guarantee of the restoration of their territory will now be made by His Majesty's Government to Finland as I understand has been made in the case of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

## 98. LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND POLAND (MARCH 20, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider bringing before the Council of the League of Nations the German aggression against Poland, in order that

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\* House of Commons, Vol. 358, p. 1953-1954. See also No. 86.

the Covenant of the League may be put into operation under Article 17, as a result of which it would be incumbent upon the neutrals, members of the League, under Article 16, to sever all trade and financial relations with Germany, to prohibit any intercourse with Germans, and to prevent all financial, commercial or personal contacts between Germany and the nationals of any other State, whether a member of the League or not.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The hon. Member will be aware that the Polish Government did not appeal to the Council of the League of Nations, either during the course of their dispute with the German Government or upon the invasion of their country by the German forces. His Majesty's Government do not consider that it would be opportune at this state to refer these matters to the Council.

MR. MANDER : Would the Government bear in mind that if action of this kind were taken, it would very much strengthen our position, from the point of view of international law, in regard to any action that we may have to take later on in dealing with neutrals?

MR. BUTLER : All these considerations have been borne in mind, but I cannot alter the answer I have given to the hon. Gentleman.

MR. MANDER : Would the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind the undesirability of creating the impression that the League is to be used only against Left Wing aggressors?

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : Was not the League revived in order to make a demonstration against the Soviet Union, and is it not now dead again?

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.) : When we are reconstructing the world after the war, will the Government bear in mind what we have lost through not using the Covenant of the League?

MR. BUTLER : I am satisfied that we have done our best to use the Covenant of the League.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ALFRED KNOX (C.) : Would the right hon. Gentleman bring forward at the same time the case of Russian aggression against Finland?

99. ANGLO-FRENCH-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS  
(WHITE PAPER)  
(MARCH 20, 1940)\*

MR. RILEY (Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the termination of the invasion of Finland by Russia, he will now consider the advisability of issuing a White Paper setting forth the negotiations of an entente between Great Britain, France and Russia which preceded the invasion of Poland by Germany and Russia.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The Government's decision on this matter was conveyed to the House by the Prime Minister on March 6,\*\* and recent events do not cause them to modify that decision.

MR. RILEY: Does not the right hon. Gentleman consider that the country is entitled to know the grounds on which the negotiations broke down, and is not aware that there is a great desire to get the facts as to what led up to this failure?

MR. BUTLER: I appreciate the hon. Member's anxiety to know the full facts, but he will remember that the Prime Minister said that we had had consultations with the French Government, and, after a full review of the circumstances, had decided not to publish a White Paper.

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.) : Does the right hon. Gentleman not realize that a statement was made to this House that we should have the facts? After all, it is this House and this Government that have to decide, not other countries.

MR. BUTLER: This Government has decided.

MR. MANDER (L.) : Is the only account we are to have M. Molotov's account?

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\*House of Commons. Vol. 358, p. 1956-1957.

\*\* See No. 94.

## 100. POLISH ARMY (APRIL 2, 1940)\*

**T**HE POLISH ARMY *began to fight when the Germans attacked Poland on September 1, 1939. The Soviet invasion of September 17 made impossible any coordination of military operations and forced the Polish Government and Supreme Command to leave Poland for an allied country. (See No. 53). In spite of this Warsaw continued to defend herself until September 29. (See No. 54); the fortress of Modlin fought until September 30; the Hel Peninsula until October 2; and the last battle of the Polish Army on Polish territory took place on October 5 in the region of Kock.*

*Marshal Smigly-Rydz, on leaving Polish territory at dawn on September 18, foresaw that Poland would continue to fight. In his last Order of the Day, he said:*

*"Soldiers:*

*The Bolshevik invasion of Poland took place at a time when our armies were performing a maneuver which was to concentrate them in the south-eastern part of Poland. The objective of this maneuver was to keep open the communication with France and England by way of Rumania in order to get the equipment and war material necessary for the continuation of the war. . .*

*I wanted. . . to get you over to France and there to organize the Polish Army. My idea was that the Polish soldier should continue to take part in the war and that at the victorious conclusion of the war the Polish Army should represent Poland and her vital interests.*

*You must remember that this is our main objective. Even if the conditions of your life are very hard*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 359, p. 41.

*you have to endure them, never forgetting that you are soldiers who are bound by discipline and soldier's honor. Those who succumb to a weakness of the spirit or to the instigations of foreign agents who try to sow discouragement among you and want to introduce dissension in your ranks — those are pawns in the hands of the enemy.*

*We have to grit our teeth and bear it. The situation is changing and the war continues.*

*You will continue to fight for Poland and you will return to Poland, bringing her victory."*

*The plan to organize the Polish Army in France (mentioned by Smigly-Rydz) had been discussed in the spring and summer of 1939 by the Polish and French Governments. On August 30, 1939, Foreign Minister Beck sent instructions to the Polish Ambassador in France to make final arrangements for the organization of a Polish division in France to be recruited from the 500,000 Poles living in France. On September 9 these arrangements were concluded in a Polish-French agreement for the organization of one Polish division in France. This division was to be a part of the Polish Army. The process of recruiting and sending the volunteers to training camps began immediately.*

*After the Polish President, Government, and Commander-in-Chief were interned in Rumania, the new President, Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz, appointed General Wladyslaw Sikorski as the new Commander-in-Chief.*

*The formation of the Polish Army continued; the Army consisted, not only of Polish citizens living in France, but also of thousands of Polish soldiers who had succeeded in reaching France by way of Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Italy.*

*On January 4, 1940, a new military agreement was concluded between Poland and France providing for a Polish Army in France consisting in all of two infantry divisions, one independent rifle brigade, and one armored brigade. Besides these, fighter squadrons were also organized (bomber squadrons were being organized in England). In May 1940 the Polish Army in France numbered about 70,000 men. At the time of*



*France's fall still two more infantry divisions were being organized in France.*

*The Polish Navy became part of the British Navy.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHAMBERLAIN): ...I would like to say a word here of our Polish Allies, to whom we are already bound not to make peace except by common agreement. My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke eloquently the other evening\* of the Poles and in particular of the prowess of the units of the Polish Navy at present operating with the Royal Navy. Divisions of the Polish Army are re-forming in France and Polish airmen are being trained both in this country and in France. We are confident that these forces will give a good account of themselves in the common struggle in which we are now engaged...

MR. ATLEE (Lab.): ...I welcome... the Prime Minister's words with regard to our Polish allies and their forces in the field... The Poles today have their forces actually in the field and everybody knows the valor of the Polish nation...

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\* The broadcast of Mr. Churchill (First Lord of the Admiralty) on March 30, 1940.

...The other day, in a well-known British harbor, I inspected the crew of a Polish destroyer. I have rarely seen a finer body of men. I was stirred by their discipline and bearing. Yet how tragic was their plight! Their ship was afloat, but their country had foundered. But as I looked around upon all the great ships of war which lay at their anchors, and at all the preparations which were being made on every side to carry this war forward at all costs as long as may be necessary, I comforted myself with the thought that when these Polish sailors have finished their work with the British Navy we will take particular care that they once more have a home to go to...

101. UNITED STATES AND POLAND  
(KELLOGG PACT)  
(APRIL 10, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the breach by Germany of the Kellogg Pact, to which the United States of America was a party, in her attack on Poland, he will consider the advisability of making representations to the United States Government with a view to the cessation of the supply of materials vital for war purposes by the United States to Germany.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : His Majesty's Government have already pointed out, in their communication to the League of Nations on September 9, 1939,<sup>†</sup> that the act of aggression of Germany against Poland was committed in disregard of the obligations which the German Government had assumed towards Poland and the other signatories of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War of August 27, 1928. But the hon. Member will be aware that this Treaty does not contain any provision for the procedure to be followed or the action to be taken in the event of its violation by one of the signatories. In any case His Majesty's Government do not consider that it is for them to make proposals to the United States Government as to how that Government should regard the violation by Germany of a treaty to which the United States are a party.

MR. MANDER: In view of the fact that the Government have communicated with the League of Nations on this subject, and that America is not a member, would it not be more

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<sup>†</sup> House of Commons. Vol. 359, p. 544.

\* See No. 75.

effective for them to consider making a direct approach to the United States Government themselves, concerning a matter of which they were really the promoters?

MR. BUTLER: I think we must allow the United States to decide its own attitude.

## 102. GERMAN WHITE BOOK (APRIL 17, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make with reference to the publication of a White Book by the German Government on alleged Polish diplomatic documents, including some dealing with British policy.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): Copies of this German White Book do not yet appear to be available. From German Press reports it seems, however to consist largely of records of conversations alleged to have taken place between United States and Polish representatives. At the end of March, the United States Secretary of State issued a statement that he and the State Department did not give the slightest credence to these alleged conversations, which did not represent in any way at any time the thought or policy of the United States Government.

MR. MANDER: Is there not reason to think that, in accordance with precedent, most of these documents were forged?

MR. BUTLER: I can only say what I have said, namely, that this does not represent, in any way or in any manner, the thought or policy of the United States.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 359, p. 937

### 103. POLAND AS AN ALLIED POWER (MAY 29, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is proposed to associate with the joint Anglo-French Secretariat established in connection with serious aspects of the Allied War efforts, any representative of the Polish Government.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The question of closer association between representatives of the Polish Government and the various Anglo-French organizations is at present under discussion with the Polish Government.

### 104. CONCLUSION OF SEPARATE PEACE (JUNE 5, 1940)\* \*

IN THE BEGINNING of June 1940 the military situation was very serious: On April 9, 1940 German troops invaded Denmark and Norway; May 2, Prime Minister Chamberlain reported to the House of Commons on the British retreat from northern Norway; May 9, Germany invaded Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; May 10, Prime Minister Chamberlain resigned; and May 11, the Churchill Government was

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 361, p. 524.

\* House of Commons. Vol. 361, p. 825.

*formed. On May 14, the Netherlands Government took refuge in Britain and on May 15, the Netherlands Army capitulated. On May 28, the Belgian Army surrendered and on May 30 Britain began the evacuation of Dunkirk. Italy was preparing to come into the war.*

*In view of all these happenings a question was raised in the House of Commons whether the other Allied Powers do not have the same obligations with regard to not making a separate peace, as those existing between Great Britain and France.*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether the Governments of our Polish, Norwegian, Dutch and Belgian Allies have given similar undertakings with regard to not making a separate peace or considering separate peace proposals to those existing between Great Britain and France.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : Article VII of the Agreement of Mutual Assistance concluded between His Majesty's Government and the Polish Government on August 25, 1939, provides that neither Government will conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.\* No formal undertakings on this subject have been concluded with the other Allied countries mentioned by the hon. Member.

MR. MANDER : Is it proposed to have any consultations with them on the subject?

MR. BUTLER : We are continually in touch with our Allies, and I am sure that we shall continue with them in our joint resolve.

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\* See No. 44.

## 105. EVACUATION OF THE POLISH ARMY TO GREAT BRITAIN (JULY 2, 1940)\*

**T**HE WAR AND political events in France raced on. (See No. 103). On June 6, 1940, the Daladier Government resigned and Paul Reynaud became the new premier; on June 9, the Norwegian Army stopped fighting; on June 10, Italy declared war on Great Britain and France, and France appealed to the United States for help.

On June 14, German troops entered Paris; France again appealed to the United States for help; and, on the following day, President Roosevelt promised France material aid. The Reynaud Government resigned on June 16 and Marshal Petain became the new premier. Great Britain suggested to France that they merge their empires in order to continue the war in common, which proposal France refused. On June 17 France asked Germany for armistice terms, and on the next day General Charles de Gaulle appealed to the French people to join him and continue the fight against the Germans. On June 22, the French-German armistice was signed at Compiègne.

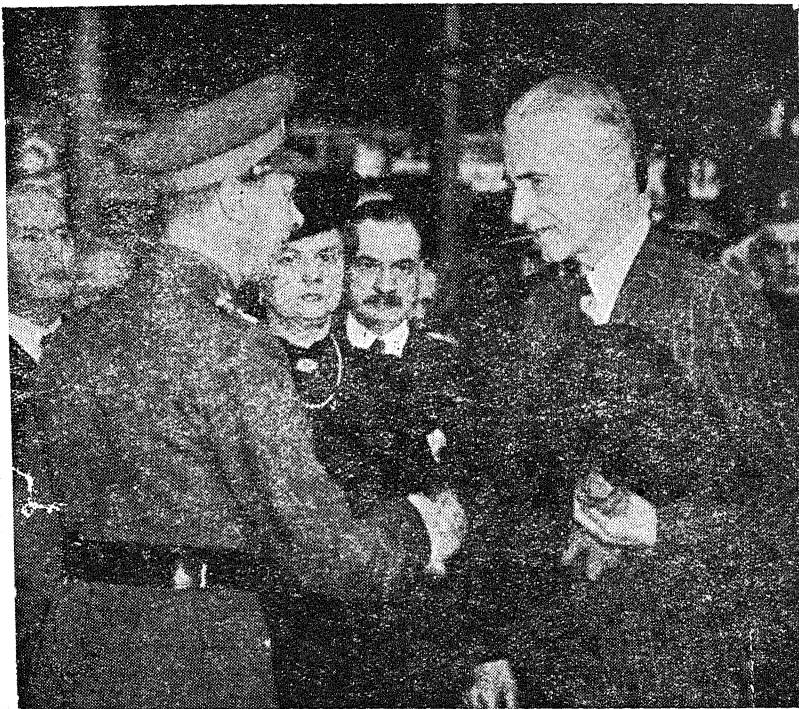
Because of the fall of France, the Polish Government, at that time in Angers, France, moved on to England on June 19; at the same time, the evacuation was begun of the Polish Army and some thousands of the Polish civilian population to England. The evacuation of the Polish Army from France was particularly difficult because the Army was scattered over such a large territory. The First Polish Division (the Grenadiers) had been engaged in battle on the Maginot Line (Saar sector) since May 1940. After the Compiègne armistice, this Division, though surrounded by Germans, did not surrender

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 362, p. 654.

*but tried, in small groups, to reach unoccupied France, and from there to England. The Second Polish Division had been fighting on another sector and had succeeded in crossing into Switzerland, where it was interned.*

*The Armored Division had engaged in very heavy fighting on the Somme and Aisne Rivers, and later had been broken up into separate battalions for fighting on the Marne front.*



After the fall of France Great Britain invites the Polish Government to London. King George VI greets the President of Poland, W. Raczkiewicz, on his arrival at the station, June 21, 1940.

*After the armistice, it forced its way, in small groups, to unoccupied France and from there on to England. The Highlander Brigade, which had fought in Norway (Narvik) during May, returned to France just at the time of France's fall. After landing on French soil, this Brigade was used to shield the*

*evacuation of the British Expeditionary Forces in the region of Rennes. There, the Brigade sustained very heavy losses, and only a small number of the men were able to get to Britain.*

*The result was that from about 80,000 Polish soldiers in France, only about 30,000 succeeded, by the end of June, in getting to England. These men were sent on to Scotland, where a new chapter was begun in the history of the Polish Army: the formation of a Polish Army in Great Britain.*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he has any statement to make with reference to the arrival of Polish and Czech units in this country.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. EDEN): Some units of the Polish and Czech Armies have arrived in this country and are being reorganized. I am not in a position to add to this statement at present, except to say that these units are a very welcome reinforcement in the struggle against our common enemy.

#### 106. GOVERNMENTS OF OCCUPIED COUNTRIES SITUATED IN GREAT BRITAIN (JULY 3, 1940)\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the countries in which the Governments of the temporarily-invaded States of Norway, Belgium, Poland, and Holland are at present situated.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The Governments of Poland, Norway, and Netherlands are established in the United Kingdom. I am not at the moment in a position to say where the Belgian Government is established.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 362, p. 813.



MR. MANDER: Are not the Government in sympathy with the idea of offering hospitality to the Governments of countries temporarily invaded by the aggressor?

MR. BUTLER: Yes, Sir, and that has been shown by our attitude to the Governments I have mentioned. We have certainly wished to take a generous and hospitable attitude.

### 107. HITLER, MUSSOLINI, AND STALIN (JULY 10, 1940)\*

THE CLANDESTINELY CONCLUDED *Soviet-German Pact of August 23, 1939; the partition of Poland; Russia's agreements with the Baltic States consenting to the installation there of Russia's military garrisons; Russian invasion of Finland, which caused the exclusion of the Soviets from the League of Nations; and, lastly, the help which the Soviets gave to the Germans in their fight in the West, all these events produced great general indignation in England.*

*This indignation grew still more when Russia took advantage of the fall of France to conduct, with the help of the Red Army, further political action with respect to her neighbors: On June 12, Russia accused Lithuania of preparing a military alliance against her, and three days later (June 15) Soviet armies invaded Lithuania. On the next day Russia delivered an ultimatum to Latvia, and on June 17, Estonia and Lithuania formed new governments, accepted Russia's demands and consented to the free passage of Russian troops. On June 26, Russia sent an ultimatum to Rumania demanding the return of Bessarabia and part of Bukovina. Two days later, Rumania transferred to Russia the claimed territories and Soviet troops marched into these provinces. On July 1, Rumania renounced British guarantees.*

*With these happenings in mind, Lord Newton made a speech in the House of Lords on July 10, in which he compared Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin.*

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\* House of Lords. Vol. 116, p. 864.

LORD NEWTON (C.): Any one who has gone to both (Germany and Soviet Union) countries, as I have done, must have realized that there is almost no difference between the two systems; the only difference that I can discover is that whereas the Jews are persecuted in the most inhuman way under the Nazi Government, in the Soviet Government they enjoy considerable influence and some of them are members of the Government itself. Democracy, however, has nothing to do with the question at all. We are not fighting the battle of democratic institutions, although one might suppose so from some of the propaganda which is produced. What we are fighting for is our existence as a nation. We are fighting for our lives and for everything that we possess, in view of the unprovoked attack which has been made upon us. There are, at this moment, three men whom I should describe as international bandits: Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Their object is not to attack democracy; their object is to take possession of all the small countries in their neighborhood and to hold them down as slaves, in the same way as in the cases of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

108. POLISH ARMY (BREAD RATION)  
(AUGUST 13, 1940) \*

CAPTAIN GRAHAM (C.) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will accede to the desire of the Polish Army in this country and reduce their daily ration of bread from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds to the more usual one of 9 ounces.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. EDEN): I cannot trace any request on behalf of the Polish Army that their bread ration be reduced to 9 ounces a day.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM: Is my right hon. Friend aware that it is their desire?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 596.

109. POLISH GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT  
TO ITALY AND RUSSIA  
(AUGUST 15, 1940)\*

MR. MALCOM MACMILLAN (Lab.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information as to the relations between the Polish Government, now in this country, and the Government of Italy and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, respectively.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): My Noble Friend does not feel he is in a position to give the information on the relations between an independent Government and other foreign Governments.

110. TRIBUTE TO POLISH AIR FORCE  
IN GREAT BRITAIN  
(AUGUST 20, 1940)\*\*

IN ACCORDANCE WITH *an agreement made between the Supreme Commands of Poland, Great Britain, and France, Polish bomber squadrons were to be organized in England, and Polish fighter squadrons organized in France. (See No. 99.)*

*Thus, in July 1940, two Polish bomber squadrons, Nos. 300 and 301 were formed in England and began to take part in military operations in September 1940. After the fall of France, about 8,000 Polish pilots reached England, where,*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 991.

\*\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 1271.

*in July 1940, the first Polish fighter squadrons, Nos. 302 and 303 were formed. On August 7, 1940, these fighter squadrons won their first victories over the Luftwaffe. The Secretary of State for Air, in his speech in the House of Commons, August 20, 1940, about the war situation, mentioned these successes.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR (SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR) : . . . Then we have Poles fighting with us. They fought splendidly in France and they are fighting well for us here now. There was one Pole, who, in a battle over this country a few days ago shot down three German aircraft himself and then saw the leader of his squadron being attacked by three aircraft sitting on his leader's tail. He drove them off and saved the life of his squadron leader.

#### 111. POLISH PRESS IN GREAT BRITAIN (AUGUST 20, 1940)\*

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : . . . In this country the most filthy, vile and slanderous anti-Soviet propaganda, is being published, some of it under the auspices of the Ministry of Information. Take, for instance, the Polish Press published in this country. In one of the Polish papers, the so-called Foreign Secretary declares that the Polish Government in this country are conducting a war against the Soviet Union. One of these Polish papers is continually filled with anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic propaganda. You could not get anything more Fascist than that propaganda, and it is supported by the Ministry of Information. . .

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 1252.

112. STATE OF WAR BETWEEN POLAND  
AND RUSSIA  
(AUGUST 21, 1940)\*

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any discussions have taken place between His Majesty's Government and the Polish Government concerning the formulation of a common foreign policy; and, if so, whether complete agreement has been reached.

MR. HICKS (Lab.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in his negotiations with the Polish Government representatives, he was informed that Poland considers herself at war with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and whether he is in a position to make a statement on the matter.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): There is the closest collaboration between His Majesty's Government and the Polish Government on all matters concerning the conduct of the war, including questions of foreign policy. Since September of last year the Polish Government have left His Majesty's Government in no doubt that they could only regard the violation of the Soviet Union of the Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact as placing them in a state of war with the Soviet Union. For the rest, as I told the hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. M. MacMillan) on August 15,\*\* my Noble Friend is not prepared to take upon himself the duty of giving information on the relations between an independent Government and other foreign Governments.

MR. GALLACHER: In view of the fact that the only center from which the so-called Polish Government can carry on war

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 1278-1279

\*\* See No. 109.

against the Soviet Union is this country, does the right hon. Gentleman consider that that is helping what he claims to be the desire of His Majesty's Government for better relations with the Soviet Union?

MR. BUTLER: The hon. Member had better leave the relations with the Soviet Union and this country to His Majesty's Government. He knows quite well that it is the desire of His Majesty's Government to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

MR. LIPSON (Ind. C.): In view of the close relationship between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government, will my right hon. Friend draw the attention of the Polish Government to the undesirability of the magazine published by representatives of the Polish Council?

### 113. ALLIED FORCES BILL. JEWS IN THE POLISH ARMY (AUGUST 21, 1940)\*

**T**HE EXISTENCE OF *Allied Forces on the territory of Great Britain forced His Majesty's Government to define the powers of foreign governments in Great Britain. Consequently the Allied Forces Bill was introduced into Parliament. During the discussion on this law the question of Jews in the Polish Army was brought up.*

THE JOINT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (SIR EDWARD GRIGG): I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

I am glad the first Bill which I have to move in my present office is one that will commend itself to the approval of the House. In its main three Clauses it is really an expression of one of our war and peace aims. In his stirring review of the

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 364, p. 1350-54, 1361, 1370-1388.

situation yesterday the Prime Minister said that although their countries had been overrun,

“the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians are still in the field, sword in hand, recognized by Great Britain and the United States as the sole representative authorities and lawful Governments of their respective States.” — (Official Report, August 20, 1940; col. 1168, Vol. 364.)

He added that we have also recognized in General de Gaulle not a sovereign Government, but an authority recognized as representing the feeling and faith of free Frenchmen outside occupied France. The object of the Bill is to enable those Governments to play the part which they desire to play in the war. They are not to be regarded as merely refugee Governments. Every one of them wishes to share in the strain and sacrifice of the war as well as in the fruits of victory. Every one of them in some measure commands the means to play its part in the war. Some of these Governments command forces belonging to all three Services, the Navy, the Army and the Air Force, some have forces belonging to only one or two of those Services, but all of them command forces of some kind. We might have sought to absorb these military elements into our own services so that they would fight under the British Flag—

MR. WEDGWOOD (Lab.): Hear, hear.

SIR E. GRIGG: — I am sure, in spite of my right hon. Friend's interjection, that the House generally agree that that course would not have been consonant with the spirit and purposes of the great enterprise to which we are dedicated in this war. We are not fighting for British freedom alone, and therefore we are not fighting for a purely British victory. We do not wish to dominate the Governments that are allied with us, either now or hereafter. We wish them to be our honored partners in this enterprise, not only in winning the war but in building up a better Europe after the war. It is in that spirit and as a symbol of that aim that the Government is seeking, very gladly, to give legal sanction to the establishment of no less than six foreign Armies on British soil, to be

trained under their own flags, under their own commanders, and under their own military law.

MR. LIPSON (Ind. C.): Will the hon. Gentleman name the six?

SIR E. GRIGG: Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland, France, and Czechoslovakia. The process is easy because the legal arrangements which are necessary for the purpose are, in point of fact, already in operation as between the free nations of the British Commonwealth. We have only to apply to each nation the legal arrangements already approved by this House in what is known as the Visiting Forces (Commonwealth) Act, under which the Dominion Governments control their own forces when they are in this country and we control ours in the Dominions. I am glad that that is so, for the parallel is a valuable one. In this matter, as in all matters, freedom is second nature to us, and we find it easy to share, just as easy as to share the air we breathe.

The provisions of the Bill are simple. I will briefly recapitulate them. Clause I confers the powers upon the authorities of the foreign Governments in this country. Sub-section (1) of this Clause confers them on the Sovereign Governments in this country which we have recognized as our Allies, and Sub-section (2) on the foreign authority which we have recognized as being in general control. Sub-section (3) deals with the powers of enforcement of these powers...

...There may be differences between the military codes to which we are giving sanction in regard to military offenses, that is to say offenses solely within the scope of military life, and offenses in which the civil population is concerned. There are two big differences in the Polish law. The Poles make death the penalty for desertion and for wounding to avoid service in the field. In our code the penalty is imprisonment for life. But that is a matter entirely between the Polish authority and its own nationals, and is not a matter, therefore, in which we should interfere...

MR. MANDER (L.): ...I should like to make one reference to the visit that, at the invitation of the Polish Government, I



with seven other Members of this House paid to the Polish troops in France at the beginning of May, just before the great offensive started. Going from East to West of France, we saw the Polish troops in training. They had already been through the fire once in Poland and the East, and were preparing to go in a second time — as they have been in a second time. Now those troops are over here, ready to play their part a third time in resisting an invasion of this country, and, indeed, in advancing upon enemy territory, too. That typifies the spirit of the splendid Allies that we have, and full tribute should be paid to them for their gallantry, under far more difficult circumstances than we in this country have yet come up against...

MR. WEDGWOOD (Lab.): ...The Polish army was formed in France, and the bulk of that army over here is the army that fought in France. That army was recruited in France more or less under duress. Refugees from Poland were given the alternative of internment or joining the army, with the result that a lot of Jewish refugees from Poland went into the army. They did not find themselves very welcome there, and certainly the feeling of Poles towards Jews can only be paralleled by the feelings of Germans towards Jews. They cannot be treated as Poles. I would like to know from the Under-Secretary what proportion of the rank and file of the Polish army are really Jewish refugees. If the number is considerable, and even if it is not, those people should have the option of being exempted from that army at the present time.

MR. LIPSON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what is his authority for saying that the Jews of Poland in any large number do not want to be regarded as Poles? Surely the whole of their complaint is that they are not treated as equal citizens and that it is their desire that they should be treated as equals.

MR. WEDGWOOD: They are interned in this country because they are Jews and claim to be Poles and when they get put into the Polish army they prefer to be treated as Jews and not as Poles.

MR. LIPSON: Surely, that is not correct. The right hon. Gentleman has said that they are interned in this country, be-

cause they are Jews, but is it not because they are Austrians or Germans?

MR. WEDGWOOD: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the trouble is that all Poles were born in Galicia, and it depends exactly on what country is their birthplace. What is the nationality of a person born in Germany in 1918? It is extremely doubtful, and in France many people of doubtful nationality were included in the Polish army because they had the alternative of going to a concentration camp. If my hon. Friend will consult with some of these Polish Jews, he will find that they are extremely anxious about this new Polish force and are desperately afraid that there is to be conscription of all Polish subjects, whether Jews or otherwise, in this Polish force. What I am trying to do is to get a definite assurance that that will not happen. The hon. Gentleman said there would be no conscription, and he was faced with a demand from the Dutch Government that Dutch citizens should join.

SIR E. GRIGG: I did not say anything of the kind — that there was no conscription. All I said was that they would not come under this Bill...

MR. SILVERMAN (Lab.): ...Everybody knows that in Poland before the war there was a great deal of the most bitter anti-Semitism. That is a fact beyond any kind of dispute, and I state it purely as a fact. The mere fact that the world has been at war for nearly a year has not, regrettable as it may be, completely revolutionized the psychology of everybody in the world. People who have been brought up in a certain atmosphere still find their minds conditioned by that atmosphere. There are Polish forces in this country. I do not want to exaggerate and, for reasons which I am sure will be understood, I do not want to refer to details or incidents, but incidents have occurred, as the hon. Gentleman knows. I am certain that the Polish Government in this country do not approve of them or want them. I happen to know that quite recently General Sikorski issued, in the standing orders to his forces, instructions designed to combat anti-semitism, which would be ridiculous in Polish forces in this country at this time —

MR. WEDGWOOD: Or at any other time.

MR. SILVERMAN: Yes, but it would be in an even higher degree wrong for this House to lend support, legislative, financial, or any other kind, to forces that were willingly encouraging that kind of thing and allowing it to persist. I am not saying that the Polish Government are doing it. I am sure they are doing all they can to restrain it. I hope that that order will have some effect, and that it will be something more than a pious expression. The Government are in a position to make representations to those authorities where complaints can reasonably be made and to see that every step in their power is taken to prevent recurrence of undesirable incidents of this kind, and to promote the friendly comradeship which ought to exist between people fighting for the same purposes in the same army. We do not recognize in this country different grades of citizenship. There are no second-class citizens, and we ought not, in legislation, to give authority to other people who happen to be in this country to do things which, without this Bill, they could not do, unless we have some kind of assurance that they any more than we will not countenance any division in their ranks.

I would like the Joint Under-Secretary, if he feels able to do so, to say that the spirit in which I have approached this question is the spirit in which they look at it, and that they expect the Polish authorities will do all they can in that regard. It is not only the Polish authorities. Regrettable as it is, there is something on the Czech side, too, which needs a certain amount of care and attention. . .

SIR E. GRIGG: . . . The hon. Member for Central Leeds (Mr. Denman) asked, like many others, particularly the right hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Wedgwood), why no provision has been made for Jews. This Bill deals with Governments that are sovereign Governments, but the Jews have no Government of that kind. There is no Jewish Government or Jewish military code. There is no Jewish military system. Therefore, if the Jews are to play their part they must play it as part of some existing military organization. This is what I

understand they wish to do. I have the utmost sympathy with their desire to play their part in winning the war, and I know how heart and soul they are behind the Allied cause, and they can only do that as units and as parts of some other national force...

... The right hon. Gentleman also raised the question of the treatment of Jews in the Polish Army and elsewhere. He accused the War Office of ignoring the Jews and of being reactionary. The War Office is not a reactionary body in any way, I can assure him, and the accusations or the insinuations which he makes against the Polish Commander-in-Chief are erroneous — I mean his insinuations about the way the men are treated in the Polish Forces.

MR. WEDGWOOD: I spoke about Prince Starhemberg. He is in the French Army.

SIR E. GRIGG: I was coming later to Prince Starhemberg, but surely the right hon. Gentleman dealt with the treatment of Jews in the Polish army?

MR. WEDGWOOD: The treatment of the Jews in the Polish army and in Poland.

SIR E. GRIGG: That is what I am dealing with. The hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman) made a speech the spirit of which I gladly acknowledge and, I must say, share entirely. I think what he said was absolutely fair and reasonable, and it would certainly be the spirit of our own approach to the whole of this problem. One of the phrases he used was an interesting phrase which does represent what is happening at the present time. He talked of "atmosphere conditioning the mind." I think that is happening at the present time. We have much reason to know that that method of approach is being followed in quarters where, perhaps, it has not been honored very closely before. Certainly in regard to the Polish army we have no reason to do anything other than commend most warmly the line which the head of that army has taken. I will read to the House the terms of an order which was issued near-

ly three weeks ago\* by General Sikorski, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish forces:

"The success of our arms and the establishment of our future national existence requires the co-ordination of our efforts for our common aim. In particular, in the Army unity must be firmly established; honest brotherhood of arms must rule and all squabbles be eliminated. My principle is that a Pole who is now fighting for the common cause has thus given sufficient evidence that he is a Pole irrespective of his origin or religion. I strictly forbid to show to soldiers of Jewish faith any unfriendliness through contemptuous remarks or anything humiliating to human dignity. All such offenses will be severely punished. This Order is to be read on parade to all soldiers."

114. "WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO RECOGNIZE ANY  
TERRITORIAL CHANGES WHICH TAKE PLACE  
DURING THE WAR"  
(SEPTEMBER 5, 1940)\*\*

**T**HE POLITICAL EVENTS *which took place in southeastern Europe (See No. 106) in connection with the annexation of Bessarabia and Bukovina by Russia and the subordination of Rumania to Germany had their corresponding happenings in the Baltic States.*

*As a result of the Soviet action, newly elected Communist-dominated parliaments proclaimed Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia Soviet republics and on July 21, 1940 asked the incorporation of these countries into the U.S.S.R.*

*On July 23, 1940, the acting Secretary of State in the U.S.A., Mr. Sumner Welles, stated:*

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\* On August 5, 1940.

\*. House of Commons. Vol. 365, p. 40; House of Lords. Vol. 117, p. 365.

*"During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic Republics — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.*

*From the day when the peoples of these Republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government the people of the United States have watched their admirable progress in self-government with deep and sympathetic interest.*

*The policy of this Government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force. They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one State, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any sovereign State, however weak.*

*These principles constitute the very foundations upon which the existing relationship between the 21 sovereign Republics of the New World rests.*

*The United States will continue to stand by these principles, because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice, and of law — in other words, the basis of modern civilization itself — cannot be spared."*

*The Soviet Government stated that they would accept these three Baltic States into the U.S.S.R. so on August 25, 1940 Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia ratified incorporation into the Russian Soviet.*

*In connection with the general political situation in eastern Europe Prime Minister Winston Churchill made a very important statement in the House of Commons on September 5, 1940 in which he stated:*

*"We do not propose to recognize any territorial chan-*

*ges which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned."*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL): . . . We have not at any time adopted, since the war broke out, the line that nothing could be changed in the territorial structure of various countries. On the other hand, we do not propose to recognize any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VISCOUNT HALIFAX): . . . Your Lordships will be aware of the recent developments which have disturbed southeastern Europe, the outcome of which is still not clear. On June 26, your Lordships will remember, ten days after France had asked for an armistice, the Soviet Government presented an ultimatum to Rumania demanding the immediate return of Bessarabia and the cession of the northern part of Bukovina. The Rumanian Government yielded to that demand, and on June 28 Soviet troops marched into the ceded provinces. Four days later Rumania renounced the British guarantee and proceeded to demonstrate her subservience to Germany by a series of measures directed against the interests of this country. . .

. . . The Rumanians were summoned by Germany and Italy on August 29 to Vienna, where they were forced to accept an arbitral award — if such it can be called — imposed by the Axis powers. Under this award Rumania was forced to cede about two-thirds of Transylvania and to evacuate the ceded territory within fifteen days. . . In return for the sacrifice of one of the most precious parts of the Rumanian motherland Rumania has received a guarantee from the Axis powers of what is left of Rumanian territory. . .

I might perhaps explain to the House what attitude His Majesty's Government take towards this Rumanian-Hungarian

settlement and towards other settlements reached under duress in time of war. We have, as your Lordships are well aware, never supported a policy based on a rigid adherence to the status quo. On the contrary, we have lent our support to the principle that we should be favorable to a modification of the status quo, always provided that such modification is just and equitable in itself and is reached by means of free and peaceful negotiation and agreement between the interested parties without aggression or compulsion.

... We are unable to accept the settlement now announced of the Hungarian-Rumanian dispute over Transylvania since that settlement is the result of a dictation by the Axis Powers imposed on Rumania under duress. We do not propose during the war to recognize territorial changes unless these have been evidently and freely agreed between all the parties concerned. I have no doubt all of us in this House hope that at the end of the war there may be a general settlement on lines so just and equitable as to give hope of its durability and to that end His Majesty's Government will use all their influence.

## 115. POLISH PUBLICATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN (SEPTEMBER 18, 1940) \*

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) asked the Minister of Information how many publications in the Polish language have been given permission to commence publication in this country since July 1st; and whether their contents are submitted to censorship.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION (MR. COOPER): I am informed that six papers in the Polish language have been published in this country since July 1. They are under no obligation to seek permission from His Majesty's Government, nor have they in fact done so. Their contents are subject to the

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 365, p. 145.



same system of voluntary censorship as English newspapers.

MR. GALLACHER: In view of the character of much that appears in these papers does the Minister not consider it desirable to give some attention to them?

116. ANGLO-FRENCH-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS  
(WHITE PAPER)  
(OCTOBER 9, 1940)\*

MR. EDMUND HARVEY (Ind.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether further consideration has recently been given to the publication of a White Paper dealing with the negotiations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the subject of Poland.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the negotiations conducted by His Majesty's Government and the French Government with the Soviet Government in 1939 with the object of restraining further aggression in Europe, and I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mr. Riley) on March 20 last.\*\* Nothing has since occurred to modify the decision of His Majesty's Government not to publish a White Paper on subject at present.

MR. HARVEY: Is the decision simply on the ground of the objections of other Powers?

MR. BUTLER: There are various grounds.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 365, p. 353-354.

\*\* See No. 99.

117. JEWS IN THE POLISH ARMY  
(OCTOBER 16, 1940)\*

MR. WEDGWOOD (Lab.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the present position of Jews of Polish origin and military age; and whether they have the option of joining the Polish Army, the British Army, or of remaining in civil life.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): I presume that the right hon. Member is referring to the Polish nationals of Jewish origin. I am informed that their position under Polish law is in all respects similar to that of other Polish nationals, and they are accordingly liable for military service in the Polish forces. As regards the conditions for the enlistment of Polish nationals in this country, I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies) on November 8 last\*\* and to the statement made by my hon. and gallant Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War in the Debate on August 21 last.\*\*\*

MR. WEDGWOOD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Polish Government now state that they do not desire the presence in the Army of any more Jewish recruits, and therefore is it not possible that they might be admitted to the British Army instead, with the consent of the Polish Government?

MR. BUTLER: Of course, it is possible for them to enlist in the British Forces, but I think I should refer the right hon. Gentleman to the Order of the day of August 5, 1940, issued by the Polish Commander-in-Chief. With the permission of the House I will read it:

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 365, p. 679-680

\*\* See No. 74

\*\*\* See No. 113.

"Soldiers taking up arms for their country have thereby proved that they are Poles without regard to race or religion. The military authorities are taking active care that these recommendations are observed."

MR. WEDGWOOD: But the right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that what is proposed there is impossible, and since that time the Polish Generals, if not the Polish Government have expressed their complete satisfaction at these people joining.

### 118. POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA (NOVEMBER 26, 1940)\*

ON NOVEMBER 11, 1940 at the Press Conference held at the British Ministry of Information in London, a joint declaration of policy by the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments was made public. Among other things this declaration stated that "...the two Governments consider it imperative to declare solemnly even now that Poland and Czechoslovakia, closing once and for all the period of past recriminations and disputes and taking into consideration the community of their fundamental interests, are determined on the conclusion of this war to enter, as independent and sovereign states, into closer political and economic association, and which would become the basis of a new order in Central Europe and a guarantee of its stability. . . The two Governments are resolved already now to cooperate closely for the defense of the future association of the two countries."\*\*

MR. MANDER (L.) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make with reference to the declaration by the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments with regard to their determination to enter into a closer political and econo-

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House of Commons. Vol. 367, p. 73.  
\*\* See also No. 80.

mic association after the war which would become the basis of a new order in Central Europe and a guarantee of its stability.

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL): His Majesty's Government warmly welcome the declaration made by the Polish Government and the Provisional Czechoslovak Government.

# 119. STATE OF WAR BETWEEN POLAND AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT (DECEMBER 4, 1940)\*

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why the Polish Forces are being rapidly armed by His Majesty's Government, in view of the fact that the Polish Government claims to be in a state of war with the Soviet Government, and that in their recent proposals to the Soviet Government His Majesty's Government promised not to render assistance to any Power or Powers engaged in war against the Soviet Union.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): The hon. Member's Question is best answered by saying that the Polish Forces are being armed against the enemies which His Majesty's Government and the Polish Government have in common, not against Powers with which His Majesty's Government are at peace.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 367, p. 554. See also No. 112.

## 120. POLISH "CORRIDOR"

(DECEMBER 5, 1940)\*

SIR MALCOLM ROBERTSON: . . . Let me turn for a moment to a suggestion which has been put forward in writing — that we should re-constitute Poland, that we should restore her independence, but that we should deprive her of the Polish corridor and Danzig. I would earnestly beg hon. Members to look into the history of that Corridor, about which so much has been written and so much has been said. There seems to be very widespread illusion that that Corridor is properly German; never was there a greater illusion. That Corridor has — I cannot speak for the present moment because we know full well that the Germans have massacred and expelled — been Polish for centuries. I am not here to suggest that the hon. Members do not know their history; but the Polish Corridor existed at the time that the Elector of Brandenburg, son of the Great Elector, had himself made King in Prussia, not of Prussia, by the Holy Roman Emperor of the time in 1701. He was quite content to be King in Prussia with that self-same Polish Corridor dividing East Prussia from Brandenburg and the rest of Germany, the Corridor becoming West Prussia very much later. That Polish Corridor was handed over by the Teutonic Knights in 1466. It remained Polish for 300 years and more until the Partition of 1772, to which this country and others to their eternal shame, consented without any protest. It remained Polish, but in later years the Germans did their best to Germanize it. There was no question, as has been suggested, of the Polonization of the Corridor, any more than there can be of the Anglicizing of Ireland. The Germans did their best to Germanize it under Bismarck and Bulow, but the Corridor re-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 367, p. 729-730, 747, 750.

mained Polish. Are we, in this country, prepared to say now to Poland, over-run and bestially ill-treated, and fighting for us, "That is all right; you fight for us now, and we will restore Poland, but we will deprive you of your Corridor, your main artery, your chance of living, and Danzig your only sea outlet?" We all know the feats of their gallant airmen and seamen and how their armies are waiting to help us. Are we going to say that to them? Can we possibly enunciate that in our peace terms without causing complete consternation and despair among the Poles?

I now turn to Czechoslovakia. It has been suggested that we should restore the independence of Czechoslovakia, but deprive them of Sudetenland, their main defensive area. Is it fair to tell the Czechs to go on fighting for us but that they will not have their defensive frontiers back? Then take the case of Rumania, and the questions of Bessarabia and Transylvania. Hon. Members know full well that the majorities in Bessarabia and Transylvania are Rumanian. Bessarabia has been overrun and annexed by Russia, and Transylvania to a large extent has been handed over to Hungary by Hitler, but the fact remains that the majorities in both territories are Rumanian. We are talking of permanent peace. How are we to deal with these questions?...

MR. MAXTON (I.L.P.): ...When the right hon. Member says that Poland belongs to the Poles, and the Polish Corridor ought to belong to them, my opinion is that Poland has no right to it because of the way she treated the Jews. I want the Jew and the Socialist to have the right to live freely and to work inside Polish frontiers, whoever the nominal rulers may be...

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (MR. ATTLEE): ...The hon. Member says that he wants liberty for Jews and the Poles. What does he do to secure that liberty? He sits by and always takes up an attitude of complete irresponsibility. His irresponsibility is part of his charm.

121. JEWS IN THE POLISH ARMY  
(FEBRUARY 6, 1941)\*

MR. SORENSON (Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that certain Polish Jewish refugees fled to this country through fear or experience of Polish anti-semitic repression; and, in view of the fact that prominent anti-semitic Poles have attempted to continue their propaganda through publications in this country, he will ensure that no Polish Jewish refugee of military age who objects through racial fears to serve in any Polish military force in this country, shall be compelled to join, but shall at least be given the option of serving in our own or another force.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. HERBERT MORRISON): The whole question of the procedure for the enforcement of conscription of Allied citizens by Allied Governments in this country is receiving urgent attention from the Departments of His Majesty's Government. As regards the position of Polish Jews in the Polish national forces, I would call the attention of my hon. Friend to the "Order of the Day" published by the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief on August 5 last,\*\* which emphasizes that all Polish citizens serving in the Polish forces are equal and that no discrimination will be tolerated on the grounds of race or religion.

MR. SORENSON: Are there any specific instances of complaints on the matter mentioned in the Question, and, if there are, will my right hon. Friend personally investigate those complaints?

House of Commons. Vol. 368, p. 1056-57.  
\* See Nos. 113 and 117.

MR. MORRISON: If my hon. Friend will communicate with me, I will see what I can do, but he will appreciate that within a certain sphere the Allied Governments have statutory rights of their own which have been granted by the House.

MR. MANDER (L.): Is it proposed to introduce shortly legislation on the compulsory calling-up of Allied subjects?

## 122. JEWS IN THE POLISH ARMY (FEBRUARY 19, 1941)\*

MR. SILVERMAN (Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Benjamin Ajzenberg and his brother Jack were arrested by two Polish soldiers accompanied by a British police officer, detained for one night in a London prison, removed under escort to a prison in Scotland, detained there for six weeks without trial, then detained for a further 10 days without trial in a Polish military camp and finally released; whether these persons are stateless civilians; and under what authority they are deprived of their liberty.

MR. LAW: I am informed that these two brothers are Polish citizens and came to this country from France with a group of Polish troops. They were assumed to be soldiers and were subsequently detained by the Polish military authorities as deserters. They have been released because it was not established that they had been properly enrolled in the Polish Army. They were not detained in a British prison in London or in Scotland.

MR. SILVERMAN: Do I understand from the hon. Member's reply that the series of facts which he has related were continuous, or was it not the case that these men were released by the Polish authorities at one time, were granted labor permits by the Ministry of Labor at a later time, and at a later time still were arrested by the Polish authorities, who at that

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 369, p. 143-145. See also No. 121.



time had full knowledge that they were not Polish soldiers at all; and were they not detained throughout the whole period as described in the Question?

MR. LAW: My information is the reverse of my hon. Friend's. As I understand it, they were genuinely thought to be Polish soldiers because they came over from occupied France with Polish troops. They disappeared, and the Polish military authorities thought they were deserters and got hold of them again.

MR. SILVERMAN asked the Secretary of State for War how many persons are now detained by the Polish authorities in this country under their powers under the Allied Forces Act; and how many persons are now detained by the Polish authorities who have never at any time served in the Polish armed forces.

MR. LAW: Apart from Polish soldiers who may be undergoing detention in Polish camps for disciplinary reasons, I am informed that there are no persons now detained by the Polish authorities in this country under the Allied Forces Act, but that six persons are detained who have never served in the Polish armed forces. Orders have been given that unless they wish to serve they are to be released immediately.

MR. SILVERMAN: Would the hon. Member bear in mind that a large number of us have been making great efforts in recent months to make the present scheme under the Allied Forces Act work harmoniously, and that if the Polish authorities are going to abuse these powers, they will make our efforts entirely useless?

MR. LAW: I understand my hon. Friend's point of view in this matter. I think that in this case a mistake was made by the Polish authorities, and that mistake will be remedied.

### 123. POLES IN RUMANIA (FEBRUARY 26, 1941) \*

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON (C.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information as to the action of the Rumanian Government in sending many Polish refugees in Rumania to be interned in German concentration camps at the request of Germany; whether any representations were made to the Rumanian Government in the matter prior to the severance of diplomatic relations; and what explanation was given.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): On January 31 the competent Rumanian authorities informed the Chilean Legation, who are in charge of Polish interests in Rumania, that all interned Polish soldiers would be sent to Germany immediately. A protest was lodged by the Chilean Chargé d'Affaires at this violation of international law, and His Majesty's Minister at Bucharest vigorously supported this protest. The only explanation given by the Rumanian Government was that they regarded this question as a purely internal matter which they were not prepared to discuss. Sir Reginald Hoare immediately expressed the strongest disapproval of this attitude. Subsequently on instructions from His Majesty's Government he formally notified the Rumanian Government that, if so base an act as the return of soldiers were committed, His Majesty's Government would not forget that General Antonescu and the members of His Government bore personal responsibility for it. When His Majesty's Legation left Bucharest on February 15, it was understood that the Rumanian Government had at least temporarily delayed

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 369, p. 493-494.

their proposed action, but there is some reason to suppose that it may now have taken place. The Rumanian Government also announced on February 8 that civilian Poles in Rumania would have to leave the country and state whether they wished to go to Germany.

SIR W. DAVISON: Does my right hon. Friend realize that the statement he has just made, that a vigorous protest was made, will be received with warm satisfaction in this country?

#### 124. TRIBUTE TO POLISH AIR FORCE (MARCH 11, 1941)\*

*ON AUGUST 8, 1940 the Germans began a series of mass air raids on England which lasted for several months and which are known to history as the "Battle of Britain." The Polish Air Force played a decisive part in this battle since they accounted for 219 enemy planes definitely destroyed and 39 probably destroyed; every eighth German plane shot down over London was shot down by a Pole.*

*On March 11, 1941 the Secretary of State for Air paid tribute to the Polish Air Force in a speech in the House of Commons.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR (SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR): . . . A great and increasing element in our strength is contributed by the Air Forces of our Allies, the squadrons of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Holland and the Free French, Belgian and Norwegian airmen who are fighting with the Royal Air Force. And there is another squadron of which I venture to prophecy that hon. Members will hear more before long, the Eagle Squadron, mounted on Hurricanes and manned by American pilots: The Royal Air Force welcomes these brave men into its ranks. Many of the squadrons I have mentioned have already proved their mettle in brilliant actions a-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 369, p. 1175.

gainst the enemy, like the famous 303 Squadron of the Polish Air Force, which in the last six months has destroyed nearly 120 enemy aircraft. . .

125. GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA. POLISH  
PRESIDENT'S BROADCAST  
(MARCH 19, 1941)

ON MARCH 1, 1941, *M. Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz*, president of the Polish Republic, made a moving broadcast from London to "the nations which love liberty and respect honor." This broadcast speech contained the following references to Russia:

*"Eighteen months ago the Germans, having broken their obligations under the Pact of Non-Aggression, attacked Poland and plunged the world into a long war.*

*When, on September 1939, Poland opposed the German aggressor, her other neighbor, Soviet Russia, unmindful of the existing treaties which had settled the historical differences between Poland and Russia, treacherously invaded the eastern areas of the Polish Republic at the height of the Polish-German war. Poland then succumbed to superior force. . .*

*Other nations were terrorized into submission. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia lost their independence when the Polish Republic, a pillar of European equilibrium, fell. . .*

*It may seem that many States in Europe now share the fate of Poland, the fate of a conquered country. The resemblance is only superficial. Poland yielded to brute force after an extraordinarily violent struggle on two fronts. . .*

*The (German) invader is ruthlessly driving hun-*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 370, p. 135.

*dreds of thousands of industrious people from their homes, robbing them of their lands and property. . . Soviet Russia does not lag behind in the persecution of Polish citizens. Poles are being deported wholesale into the forests of Siberia and Central Asia, neither women nor old men are spared, and the conditions in which they are forced to exist are outrageous. . .*

*We are proud that our country, though defeated in an unequal struggle, has not surrendered. We have produced no traitors and will never surrender. . . We are fighting on, for we believe in our victory. We believe that justice and morality will prevail over evil and violence. We shall conquer, so help us God."*

MR. WEDGWOOD (Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to a recent broadcast by the Polish President, which was transmitted in a translated version over the Home Service, in which unsuitable references to Russia were made, giving the impression that we were involved in war with that country; and will he convey to the Polish authorities now in England that every endeavor ought to be made to improve Anglo-Russian relations.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER): This broadcast was addressed by the President of Poland to the Polish people, and I can find no passage in it which conveys the impression derived by the right hon. Gentleman. The responsibility for Anglo-Soviet relations rests with the two Governments concerned.

MR. WEDGWOOD: Has the right hon. Gentleman seen a translation of this broadcast?

MR. BUTLER: Yes, Sir, but I did not derive from it the same impression as did the right hon. Gentleman.

## 126. POLISH PUBLICATIONS (APRIL 9, 1941)\*

THE POLISH GOVERNMENT *many times insisted that the Polish press cease the publication of its various newspapers. In this regard the Polish Government issued three statements. One of these statements, that of November 22, 1940, reads as follows:*

*"The Polish Government has decided that for the purpose of national unity during the present war, there must be published, here, in exile, one political newspaper only, namely, "Dziennik Polski" (The Polish Daily)*

*"The political parties composing the national unity agreed with this decision.*

*"To carry out this decision the Polish Government asked the various publishers to discontinue the publication of their newspapers.*

*"The publication "Jestem Polakiem" (I am a Pole) which was not supported by any of the political parties composing the national unity, did not concur.*

*"This is harmful and must be condemned as a violation of national discipline."*

MR. LIPSON (Ind. C.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will represent to the Polish Government that the anti-semitic and Fascist articles appearing in the Polish newspaper "Jestem Polakiem" ("I am a Pole") are causing grave concern to many friends of Poland in this country.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BUTLER) : The Polish Government are well aware of the views

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 370, p. 1539-1541.

of His Majesty's Government on this question. I understand, however, that this Polish paper is not in any way connected with the Polish Government, whose general attitude has been made clear in statements published on September 2, November 22 and December 2 last in the "Dziennik Polski", the only Polish political paper appearing in this country which they recognize officially. I am communicating a translation of these statements to the hon. Member.

MR. LIPSON: In view of the fact that these articles are quite opposed to the objects for which we are fighting this war, will my right hon. Friend consider whether it is not possible to deport the writer of them, who is taking advantage of the hospitality offered by this country?

MR. BUTLER: I think I had better refer hon. Members who are interested in this matter to an answer which is to be given later by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Information to a Question on the subject.

MR. SILVERMAN (Lab.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these offensive publications are not confined to this newspaper, but are to be found in a great many other papers published in Polish in this country, and can he say how those papers are financed?

MR. BUTLER: As I say, I had better refer the hon. Member to an answer which is to be given by the Minister of Information.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): In view of the fact that these articles are in fact opposed to the declared policy of the Polish Government, and are known to be offensive to very many Poles, as to all British people, could not His Majesty's Government make representations to the Polish Government that they should themselves take some action?

MR. BUTLER: I think the Polish Government probably feel this more deeply than we do, and will do what they can to counteract the effect of these articles. I am glad to take the opportunity of saying that this paper has nothing to do with the Polish Government.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Lab.) asked the Minister of Information

whether his attention has been called to an anti-Semitic Polish publication, "I am a Pole"; what steps he is taking to ban that journal which is conducting a policy so contrary to our own war effort that the Germans have used it as an anti-British propaganda in Poland; and whether as this publication does not meet with the approval of the Polish Government, he will see that this paper is suppressed without delay.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION (MR. DUFF COOPER) : Yes, Sir. My attention has been drawn to the paper in question, which has not received any assistance or support from the Ministry of Information. As regards the second and third parts of the Question, responsibility for the suppression of newspapers does not rest with the Ministry of Information.

MR. WEDGWOOD: Is it not possible for the Ministry of Information to stop the supply of paper, as they have control over it?

MR. COOPER: This paper originally appeared before certain powers were taken by the Ministry for stopping paper, and I understand that the publishers already have a sufficient supply. It is not in our power to prevent their getting paper at present.

MR. SILVERMAN: Can the Minister say how it is that papers are allowed to be published in Polish which would be suppressed if they appeared in English?

MR. COOPER: I cannot accept the hon. Member's assumption that this paper would be suppressed if it was in English. It has never been the policy of the Ministry to suppress a paper simply on account of its views.

MR. SILVERMAN: Is the Minister aware that this paper is definitely, clearly and overwhelmingly Fascist in outlook and in the views which it expresses, and does he say that it is permissible under the Regulations?

MR. COOPER: As the hon. Member is aware, only two papers have so far been suppressed since the outbreak of the war. The question of suppressing papers does not rest with the Ministry of Information; it is only when the papers are really doing great harm to the war effort of the country that



they are suppressed. I am not saying that this paper should not be suppressed.

127. POLISH NEWSPAPERS  
(MAY 8, 1941)\*

MR. LIPSON (Ind. C.) asked the Home Secretary whether he has seen the unanimous statement of the Council of Ministers of the Polish Government that the activities of "Jestem Polakiem" ("I am a Pole") are harmful to the British cause and should be condemned; and will he take steps to ban the publication of this paper, seeing that what injures the Polish cause must also injure Britain's.

MR. H. MORRISON: The powers under the Defense Regulations to exercise control over newspapers can be exercised only where I am satisfied that there has been a systematic publication of matter which is, in my opinion, calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue. After consultation with my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Information, I have come to the conclusion that I should not be justified, at any rate on the information before me at present, in taking action in respect of this publication.

MR. LIPSON: Would my right hon. Friend give further consideration to this matter, in view of the fact that the activity of this paper has been commended in the Nazi Press and that it is being freely circulated among the Polish serving men in this country?

MR. MORRISON: I will continue to keep the matter under review. The behavior of the publication will be watched.

MR. RHYS DAVIES (Lab.): Can the right hon. Gentleman make representations to the Polish authorities in this country

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 371, p. 965-966. See also No. 126.

that they should try to induce this paper to drop its anti-Jewish propaganda?

MR. MORRISON: The matter has already been under consideration by the Polish authorities, and it would appear that the action which the hon. Member now suggests has already been taken.

MR. MANDER (L.): Would it not be better to treat this paper with the contempt it deserves, and not give it too much publicity?

HON. MEMBERS: No.

## 128. POLISH NEWSPAPERS (JUNE 11, 1941) :

MR. LIPSON (Ind. C.) asked the Minister of Supply whether in view of the shortage of newsprint, he has yet decided whether he can continue to provide newsprint for 13 Polish newspapers published in this country; and to what extent he proposes to reduce the number.

THE MINISTER OF SUPPLY (SIR ANDREW DUNCAN) : Two of these journals have ceased publication. I am in consultation with my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for War and the Minister of Information regarding the remainder. The need of the Polish forces and civilians now in this country for publications in their own language has, of course, to be borne in mind.

MR. LIPSON: While I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer, will he bear in mind that, while paper was being provided for these newspapers, a unit of the Royal Air Force was denied newsprint for the continuation of its own publication, and ought not such a requirement be given consideration?

SIR A. DUNCAN: Yes, Sir, but, unfortunately, it is a question of the supply of paper.

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: House of Commons. Vol. 372, p. 195. See also No. 127

COMMANDER LOCKER-LAMPSON (C.) : Will the Minister put a stop to the publication of circulars?

## 129. GERMAN INVASION OF RUSSIA (JUNE 24, 1941)\*

*On June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded Russia.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. EDEN) :  
... There is one reference I would ask the House to let me make. At a time like this our thoughts go out with heartfelt sympathy to our Polish Ally. Once again, their soil is a battlefield. Once again their people suffer for no fault of their own. The Polish people have had a hard history. By their courage in a time of unparalleled ordeal, they have earned and they will redeem their freedom. That remains our pledge...

MR. GALLACHER (Com.) : ... When the Soviet Union found it impossible to get a peace pact, they signed the non-aggression pact with Germany in order to get time to prepare their defense. For the preparation of these defenses they moved into Poland. How many members of this House claimed to know that an arrangement had been made between the Soviet Union and Germany to divide up Poland. The present Prime Minister said it was a good thing that Russia should stand on the lines she then occupied.\*\* How much better is it now? It would have been a tragedy if the road to Leningrad had been wide open today. It was a wise step to close it. When the Baltic States decided to go over to the Soviet Union, was that not an act of wisdom? The control and influence of the Nazis were broken. If they had not gone over, what would have been the position of the Baltic States today? They would have been completely under the control of the Nazis...

MR. HENRY STRAUSS (C.) : To a large extent we are ready

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 372, p. 975, 986, 995, 997.  
\*\* See No. 57.

to let bygones be bygones and, as long as Russia is fighting with its forces against Germany, for so long we will collaborate fully and to the utmost of our ability, because it is to the interest of both countries to defeat the greatest menace in the world, the armed might of Germany. But do not let us make the sort of mistake that was suggested by the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) which might be followed misguidedly by our propaganda, by saying things, just because Russia is now fighting Germany, which will do us great injury throughout the world. The hon. Member had the effrontery to speak of the Baltic States as joining the Soviet Union. Perhaps he relies on the acts of Parliaments nominally elected by universal suffrage, but he failed to mention that the only candidates permitted in the elections were candidates of the Communist party, and that the elections in the Baltic States before they "joined the Soviet Union", as he put it, were indistinguishable in principle and practice from the elections held from time to time by Hitler for the Reichstag.\* Let us by all means do everything we can to support the Soviet Union in its fight against the armed might of Germany, but do not let us, however tempted, try for one moment to gloss over the crimes which in the past their Government have committed, because that will do us the greatest injury throughout the world...

MR. MANDER (L.): In his speech today the Foreign Secretary paid a well-deserved tribute to the Polish Government on the very difficult position in which they found themselves, in view of the struggle that is going on. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will, during the coming weeks and months, use all his diplomatic and persuasive abilities for the purpose of trying to reconcile those two great countries, Poland and Soviet Russia. Their differences and difficulties are obvious and well known to us, and he would be rendering a very great service to the Allied cause, to the destruction of Nazism and the promotion of the future happiness of Europe, if he were able, as I believe he well might

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See No. 114.

be, with good will on both sides, to arrange some sort of understanding or accommodation between those two great countries. The question also arises whether there happens to be in Russia at the present time any number of Allied subjects, prisoners of war or otherwise, who might be available if released for the purposes of the common effort. I do not know whether there are any considerable numbers, but it is a matter to which I am sure my right hon. Friend will give attention.

### 130. BRITISH-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT (JULY 15, 1941)\*

ON JULY 12, 1941, the *British-Russian Agreement* as given below, was concluded in Moscow:

*"His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have concluded the present Agreement and declare as follows:*

*1). The two governments mutually undertake to render each other assistance and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany.*

*2). They further undertake that during this war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.*

*The present Agreement has been concluded in duplicate in the English and Russian languages.*

*Both texts have equal force."*

MR. LEES-SMITH (Lab.): May I ask the Prime Minister whether he has any information to give the House with regard to the Russian Agreement?

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL): Towards the end of last week it became possible to make a solemn agreement be-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 373, p. 463-464.

tween the British and Russian Governments, carrying with it the full assent of the British and Russian people and all the great Dominions of the Crown, for united action against the common foe. Both the British and Russian Governments have undertaken to continue the war against Hitlerite Germany to the utmost of their strength, to help each other as much as possible in every way and not to make peace separately. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and the right hon. and learned Member for East Bristol (Sir Stafford Cripps), our Ambassador in Moscow, were indefatigable in carrying matters to a swift conclusion. The Agreement which has been signed, the text of which has been published, cannot fail to exercise a highly beneficial and potent influence on the future of the war. It is, of course, an Alliance, and the Russian people are now our Allies. General Smuts has, with his usual commanding wisdom, made a comment which, as it entirely represents the view of His Majesty's Government, I should like to repeat now. He says:

"Let no one say that we are now in league with Communists and are fighting the battle of Communism. More fitly can neutralists and fence sitters be charged with fighting the battle of Nazism. If Hitler, in his insane megalomania, has driven Russia to fighting in self-defense, we bless her arms and wish her all success, without for a moment identifying ourselves with her Communistic creed. Hitler has made her his enemy and not us friendly to her creed, just as previously he treacherously made her his friend without embracing her Communism."

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, in these busy days, has also been instrumental in bringing about a very great measure of agreement between the Russian Soviet State and the Polish Republic. These negotiations have not yet reached their conclusion, but I am very hopeful that, aided by the statesmanship of General Sikorski, another important step will soon be taken in the marshalling of all the peoples of the world against the criminals who have darkened its life and menaced its future.

131. BRITISH ALLIES  
(JULY 16, 1941)\*

**M**R. MANDER (L.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will publish the treaties of alliance existing between this country and Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Yugoslavia, Free France and Abyssinia.

**MR. EDEN** (The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs): The only treaty of alliance with any of the countries mentioned is the Anglo-Polish agreement regarding mutual assistance signed in London on August 25, 1939, and published as Cmd. Paper 6101. It will, however, be recalled that in the resolution unanimously adopted at the Inter-Allied meeting in London on June 12, the Governments represented were described as being engaged together in the fight against aggression, and they agreed to continue the struggle against German or Italian oppression until victory was won, and mutually to assist each other in this struggle to the utmost of their respective capacities. No formal treaties are, indeed, necessary to express the close ties of friendship which bind the Allied peoples, and which are finding expression in deeds rather than in words.

**MR. MANDER:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Ministry of Information stated last week that we only played the National Anthem of countries with whom we had treaties of alliance? Would he be good enough to look into the matter further and try to give accurate information to the Ministry of Information or to receive the same himself?

**MR. EDEN:** I do not think I have any need to look into the matter further. The position is quite clear; we do not need a formal treaty in order to be the Ally of any nation.

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 373, p. 573.

## 132. POLISH-SOVIET AGREEMENT

(July 30, 1941)\*

**I**MMEDIATELY FOLLOWING the outbreak of German-Soviet hostilities the British Government began to mediate between the Governments of Poland and Soviet Russia with the aim of establishing diplomatic relations and mutual cooperation between the two Governments.

Polish Prime Minister General Sikorski enumerated in his speeches of June 23<sup>1</sup> and July 2, 1939<sup>2</sup> the conditions on which future Polish-Soviet relations should be based. These conditions were: a) that Soviet Russia declare the Soviet-German treaties of August 23, 1939 (see No. 43) and September 28, 1939 (see No. 57) as null and void; b) that Soviet Russia recognize the Treaty of Peace concluded with Poland in Riga on March 18, 1921, and later violated by Russia on September 17, 1939 (see No. 53); c) that Soviet Russia recognize the Moscow Non-Aggression Pact of July 25, 1932, and the Convention for the Definition of Aggression signed in London on July 3, 1933; d) that the Soviet Government release the hundreds of thousands of Poles from Soviet concentration camps and prisons.

The negotiations between Prime Minister Sikorski and Soviet Ambassador Maisky started on July 5, 1941, in the British Foreign Office with the mediation of Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It was evident that the Russian point of view differed considerably from the Polish. The Soviet Government accepted the principle that the Russian-German treaties of

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 373, pp. 1502-1504.

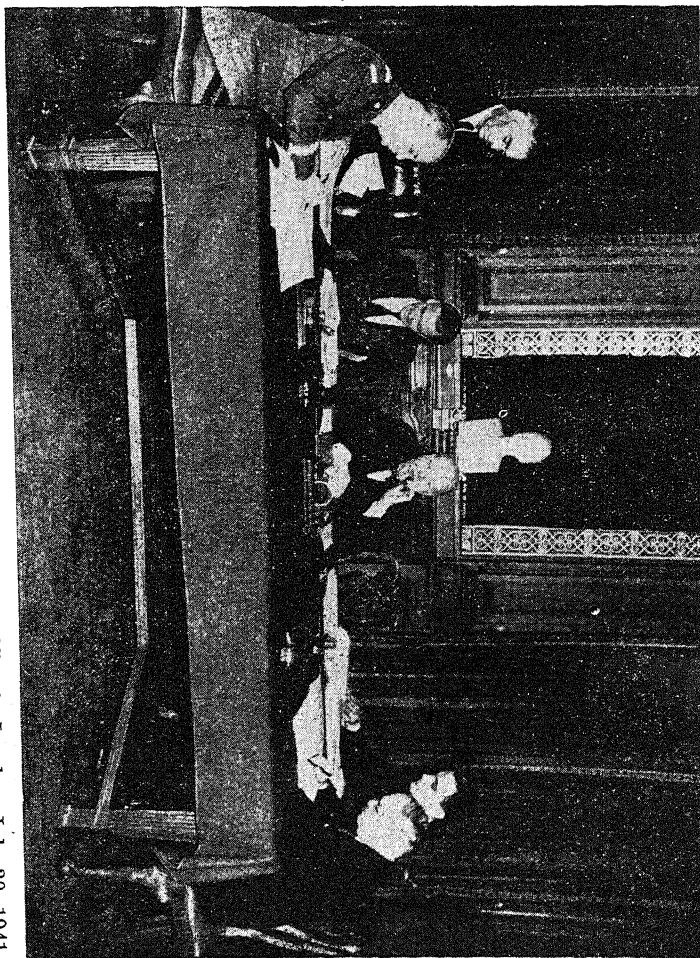
<sup>1</sup> Broadcast to Poland.

<sup>2</sup> At the luncheon of the National Defense Public Interest Committee.



1939 concerning Poland had lost their validity. But she refused to mention "*expressis verbis*" the Riga Treaty of 1921 and the other pacts with Poland based on that Treaty. The

Signing of the Polish-Soviet Agreement at the Foreign Office in London, July 30, 1941.  
Sikorski — Foreign Secretary A. Eden — Prime Minister Churchill — Soviet Ambassador I. Maisky.



*Soviet Government avoided specific terms and wanted an ambiguous formula which would give the impression that the most important question, that of the Soviet-Polish frontier,*

was still open. As a result of these negotiations the Polish-Soviet Agreement (see below), signed by Prime Minister Sikorski and Ambassador Maisky contains contradictory statements. For instance paragraph 1 of the Agreement implicitly recognizes, on the basis "*pacta sunt servanda*", the validity of the Riga Treaty; but in the protocol attached to the Agreement, amnesty to Polish citizens detained on Soviet territory is mentioned. This can be interpreted to mean that the territorial changes of the Soviet-German Pact of September 28, 1939, had not lost their validity.

The Soviet wish to conclude this ambiguous agreement with Poland led to a crisis in the Polish Government. One group of Polish Ministers thought that the most important conditions of normal Polish-Soviet relations was the unequivocal return to the "*status quo ante*" of August 1939. Prime Minister Deputy General K. Sosnkowski, Minister for Foreign Affairs A. Zaleski, and Minister of Justice M. Seyda were against Prime Minister Sikorski's policy of yielding to the pressure. After the Prime Minister rejected their criticisms of the definite text of the Agreement, the above-mentioned members of the Polish Government resigned on July 25, 1941. Notwithstanding their resignations and without the authorization of the President of Poland which is required by the Polish Constitution, Prime Minister Sikorski signed the Agreement on July 30, 1941.

At the same time Prime Minister Sikorski received a note from the Polish Government (see the speech of Mr. Eden below) in which the British Government accepted the Polish interpretation of the Agreement: non-recognition of any territorial changes effected by the Russians in Poland.

The text of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941, is as follows:

1. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognizes the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 as to territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity. The Polish Government declares that Poland is not bound by any Agreement with any third

*Power which is directed against the U.S.S.R.*

*2. Diplomatic relations will be restored between the two Governments upon the signature of this Agreement and immediate exchange of ambassadors will be arranged.*

*3. The two Governments mutually agree to render one another aid and support of all kind in the present war against Hitlerite Germany.*

*4. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics expresses its consent to the formation on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of a Polish army under a commander appointed by the Polish Government, in agreement with the Soviet Government. The Polish army on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics being subordinated — in an operational sense — to the Supreme Command of the U.S.S.R., in which the Polish army will be represented. All details as to command, organization and employment of this force will be settled in a subsequent Agreement.*

*5. This Agreement will come into force immediately upon its signature and without ratification. The present Agreement is drawn up in two copies, each of them in the Russian and Polish languages. Both texts have equal force.*

*The following protocol is attached to the Agreement: "The Soviet Government grants an amnesty to all Polish citizens now detained on Soviet territory either as prisoners of war or on other sufficient grounds as from the resumption of diplomatic relations."*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. EDEN): I must apologize to the House for trespassing on its time, but when an international event of importance occurs, I think it right that the first public announcement of that event should, if possible, be made in Parliament itself. I am very glad to be able to inform the House that an Agreement between the Soviet Union and Poland was signed at the Foreign Office this afternoon. Under that Agreement the Soviet Government recognize that the Soviet-German Treaties of

1939 as to the territorial changes in Poland have lost their validity, while the Polish Government declare that Poland is not bound by any agreement with a third party directed against the Soviet Union. Diplomatic relations will be restored at once and Ambassadors exchanged. The two Governments agree to render each other support of all kinds in the war against Hitlerite Germany. The Soviet Government agree to the formation of a Polish Army on Soviet territory. This Polish Army will be subordinated, in an operational sense, to the supreme command of the Soviet Union. Attached to the Agreement is a Protocol by which the Soviet Government grant an amnesty to all Polish citizens now detained on Soviet territory, either as prisoners of war or on other grounds, as from the resumption of diplomatic relations. Here, perhaps, I may say that arrangements for immediate resumption are being made.

After the signature of the Agreement, I handed General Sikorski a Note in the following terms:

"On the occasion of the signature of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of today's date, I desire to take the opportunity of informing you that in conformity with the provisions of the Agreement of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland of August 25, 1939, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have entered into no undertaking towards the U.S.S.R. which affects the relations between that country and Poland. I also desire to assure you that His Majesty's Government do not recognize any territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August, 1939."

General Sikorski handed me a reply in the following terms:

"The Polish Government take note of your Excellency's letter dated July 30, 1941, and desire to express sincere satisfaction at the statement that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom do not recognize any territorial changes which have been effect-

ed in Poland since August, 1939. This corresponds with the view of the Polish Government, who, as they have previously informed His Majesty's Government, have never recognized any territorial changes effected in Poland since the outbreak of the present war."

I want to say a word in connection with the Note which I handed to General Sikorski. It is stated in paragraph I of the the Soviet-Polish Agreement that the Soviet Government recognize the Soviet-German Treaties of 1939 concerning territorial changes in Poland, as having lost their validity. The attitude of His Majesty's Government in these matters was stated in general terms by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on September 5, 1940,\* when he said that His Majesty's Government did not propose to recognize any territorial changes which took place during the war, unless they took place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned. This holds good with the territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August, 1939, and I informed the Polish Government accordingly in my official Note. As to the future frontiers of Poland, as of other European countries, I would draw attention to what my right hon. Friend said in the speech to which I have referred. I am sure the House will agree with me that both parties are to be warmly congratulated on the signature of this Agreement. This is an historic event. It will lay a firm foundation for future collaboration between the two countries in the war against the common enemy. It will, therefore, be a valuable contribution to the Allied cause, and will be warmly welcomed in all friendly countries, and not least, I feel sure, by public opinion throughout the British Empire.

MR. NOEL-BAKER (Lab.): May I respectfully congratulate the Foreign Secretary on the personal service he has rendered in helping to negotiate this very notable Agreement? Does he think it appropriate and desirable to express to the Governments of our two Allies the appreciation of the Members

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\* See No. 114.

of this House of the statesmanship and generosity they have both shown?

CAPTAIN MCEWEN (C.) : Am I right in assuming that as a result of this Agreement, no guarantee of frontiers in Eastern Europe will be undertaken by His Majesty's Government?

MR. EDEN : Yes, Sir. The exchange of Notes which I have just read to the House does not involve any guarantee of frontiers by His Majesty's Government.

SIR PERCY HARRIS (L.) : Are we right in saying that both parties to this Agreement are satisfied with its terms, and that it is mutual in respect to the Governments of both nations?

MR. EDEN : Yes, Sir, and I think, in view of past history, we ought, in fairness, to repeat our congratulations to those who have shown such wise statesmanship in coming to this Agreement.

MR. MANDER (L.) : On the question of the guarantee of frontiers, surely the existing guarantees to Poland hold good?

MR. EDEN : There is, as I have said, no guarantee of frontiers.

MR. ELLIS SMITH (Lab.) : In view of the huge potential Polish Army in the Soviet Union, will the Foreign Secretary consider doing all he possibly can to equip that Army as soon as possible?

MR. EDEN : That will be a matter for the Soviet Government, but we had in our minds throughout the negotiations the enormous value to the Allied cause in raising and equipping rapidly, a Polish Army in Russia.

MR. HORE-BELISHA (Ind. L.) : May I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the part he has taken in mediating this Agreement, which is of such good augury for the new order in Europe? Will he also make known to our principal enemy, Hitler, that this is the result of his wanton attack upon Russia?

MR. NESS EDWARDS (Lab.) : Was the Note which was handed to General Sikorski at the termination of the signing of the Treaty known beforehand? Was it part of the amicable arrangements of all the parties?

MR. EDEN : Oh, yes, all that was arranged beforehand.

133. POLISH DEPORTEES AND POLISH  
PRISONERS OF WAR IN RUSSIA  
(AUGUST 6, 1941) \*

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE now to say just how many Polish citizens were forcibly deported to Russia from Soviet-occupied Poland during the years 1939-1941. It would be safe to say that these deportees numbered approximately 2,000,000 men, women, and children. Aside from this estimate of civilians the official Soviet source ("Krasnaia Zvezda" of September 17, 1940) stated that the Red Army took 181,000 Polish soldiers of the active Army as prisoners of war, including 10,000 officers.

CAPTAIN ALAN GRAHAM (C.) : asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will use his good offices with the Soviet Government to obtain entry into that country of officers of the International Red Cross for the relief of refugees and prisoners there.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. EDEN) : If my hon. and gallant Friend has in mind the position of Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R., this has been covered by the recent Polish-Soviet Agreement signed on July 30, I would draw his attention in particular to the Protocol by which the Soviet Government grant an amnesty to all Polish citizens detained on Soviet territory and to the arrangements contemplated for the formation of a Polish army in the U.S.S.R.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM : Would it not be of assistance to the war effort of our Soviet Ally if more facilities were provided for International Red Cross officers for general assistance to refugees and former prisoners?

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 373, p. 1926-1927.

MR. EDEN: I do not know to what former prisoners my hon. and gallant Friend refers.

134. POLISH-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT  
CZECHOSLOVAK-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT  
(AUGUST 6, 1941)\*

ON JULY 18, 1941, the British Government recognized the Czechoslovak Provisional Government as the legal government of the Czechoslovak Republic. On the same day the Czechoslovak-Russian Agreement was concluded providing for an exchange of diplomatic representatives, mutual aid in the war against Germany, and the creation of a Czech legion in Russia.

MR. ATTLEE (Lab.): The House has already had an opportunity of welcoming the recent Polish-Soviet Agreement, which closes an unhappy chapter in the history of both these Allies of ours and will, we hope, open up the way to a happier future. A further step is the gathering together of the peoples of Europe and the world against the spirit of aggression and domination\* by Hitlerite Germany, as is shown by the full recognition now accorded to the Government of Czechoslovakia by His Majesty's Government and the Government of the U.S.S.R. We have been glad recently to welcome to these shores the young king of Yugoslavia, General Simovitch and other members of that Government. With the rulers and Governments of other countries overrun by the invader, who have taken refuge here pending the liberation of their countries, we are in the closest collaboration.

SIR A. SOUTHBY (C.): I pay my tribute to the work of the Foreign Secretary. Whatever mistakes he has made in the past, he has a great triumph to his credit in the accommodation which he has been able to effect between Poland and Rus-

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 373, p. 1980, 2015-2021, 2042.



sia. It is a diplomatic triumph of the first magnitude, for which he should be praised by everybody who studies international affairs. It may well have an enormous influence upon Europe in the future and upon the conduct of the war.

MR. MANDER (L.) : The signing of the Russo-Polish Pact was an event of first-class importance and reflects the greatest credit on everybody concerned. Particularly, would I commend the attitude of the Polish Government and General Sikorski, the Prime Minister of Poland. It was, on his part, an act of the highest statesmanship and great courage, for which we should always be very grateful. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also has earned the gratitude of the nation for the very happy part he has played in this matter. It is sometimes said by those who, I think, do not altogether appreciate what has happened, that the Polish Government is just the same as the Government in that country before the war—that it is reactionary and of the Right. I venture to think that is quite untrue. It is now, broadly representative and progressive in outlook.

Let me give one example to prove what I am saying. Some years ago, when I was in Poland I was in a little mountain resort called Zakopane. I had an introduction to a certain Cracow professor who was one of the leaders of the Peasant Party, which, though representing 70 per cent. of the nation, was then entirely unrepresented in the Government. He had recently been in prison for political reasons—because the national peasants had held some big meetings. Finding that he was in that resort I endeavored to get into touch with him. I had the greatest difficulty in doing so. I had to go secretly, by roundabout ways, to his hotel, looking all the time to see that nobody was about. Finally, I had an interesting discussion with him in his bedroom, with the windows carefully closed. That professor, Professor Kot, is now one of the leading Ministers of the present Polish Government in London. It shows the remarkable change in the political orientation of the Polish Government, a point which ought to be made clear.

While I congratulate the Foreign Secretary upon the part he has played in connection with the Russo-Polish Pact, I hope that he will go further and direct his attention to the interesting negotiations which have been going on, for sometime, between the Polish and Czechoslovakian Governments. They hold out great hopes for the future, not only as between those two countries but as regards others who may associate themselves with the contemplated federation, or confederation. I think the Foreign Secretary could usefully intervene and stimulate those negotiations which, at the moment, are not getting on quite as rapidly as one could wish.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. EDEN) : Before I close I should like to say a word or two about the Russian-Polish negotiations and the situation at present on the Russian front. My right hon. Friend has said with truth that we have watched with growing admiration the magnificent resistance of the Russian Army. The House equally welcomed the arrangement to which a few days ago the Russian and Polish Governments came for the immediate regulation of their affairs. It is our hope that this arrangement is the opening of a new chapter in the relations between these two Powers. I am glad that my hon. Friend paid a very generous tribute to the Polish Prime Minister. It is richly deserved, and we must always pay a tribute to those who are willing to rise superior to past memories, however bitter, and to try to work in true statesmanship for a better future. I am glad to be able to tell the House that real dispatch is being used in giving effect to the Agreement so recently reached. The Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Forces in Russia has already been chosen,\* appointed by the Polish Government in agreement with the Soviet Government, and has begun his work. Officers from this country and also one or two political representatives, Polish officers, have already arrived in Moscow and begun their work, and I have been assured by both Governments, and I am convinced that it is true, that they are determined to work this Agreement with energy, in order to make

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\* General Wladyslaw Anders, a prisoner of war in Russia, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Forces in Russia.

the maximum contribution they can to the defeat of Germany at the earliest possible moment.

### 135. ATLANTIC CHARTER (SEPTEMBER 9, 1941)\*

**O**N AUGUST 14, 1941, a declaration, later called "*The Atlantic Charter*", was published by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. It reads:

*"Joint declaration of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.*

*First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;*

*Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;*

*Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;*

*Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;*

*Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the*

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\* House of Commons. Vol. 374, p. 67-69.

*object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement, and social security;*

*Sixth, after the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;*

*Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;*

*Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL."

*Eight months before this joint declaration, President Roosevelt, in his message to the U. S. Congress on January 20, 1941, proclaimed the "Four Human Freedoms." The message reads:*

*"In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms:*

*The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.*

*The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world.*

*The third is freedom from want, which translated into world terms means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.*

*The fourth is freedom from fear, which translated into world terms means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world!"*

*These two documents should serve humanity as a guarantee by the great democracies that after these recent years of blood, violence, wrong-doing, and devastation an era of law, justice, liberty, and peace will reign over the world.*

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL): I have, as the House knows, hitherto consistently deprecated the formulation of peace aims or war aims—however you put it—by His Majesty's Government, at this stage. I deprecate it at this time, when the end of the war is not in sight, when the conflict sways to and fro with alternating fortunes and when conditions and associations at the end of the war are unforeseeable. But a Joint Declaration by Great Britain and the United States is an event of a totally different nature. Although the principles in the Declaration, and much of the language, have long been familiar to the British and American democracies, the fact that it is a united Declaration sets up a milestone or monument which needs only the stroke of victory to become a permanent part of the history of human progress. The purpose of the Joint Declaration signed by President Roosevelt and myself on August 12, is stated in the Preamble to be:

*"To make known certain common principles in the national policies of our respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world."*

No words are needed to emphasize the future promise held out

to the world by such a joint Declaration by the United States and Great Britain. I need only draw attention, for instance, to the phrase in Paragraph 6:

‘after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny.’

to show the profound and vital character of the solemn agreement into which we have jointly entered. Questions have been asked, and will no doubt be asked, as to exactly what is implied by this or that point, and explanations have been invited. It is a wise rule that when two parties have agreed a statement one of them shall not, thereafter, without consultation with the other, seek to put special or strained interpretations upon this or that passage. I propose, therefore, to speak today only in an exclusive sense.

First, the Joint Declaration does not try to explain how the broad principles proclaimed by it are to be applied to each and every case, which will have to be dealt with when the war comes to an end. It would not be wise for us, at this moment, to be drawn into laborious discussions on how it is to fit all the manifold problems with which we shall be faced after the war. Secondly, the Joint Declaration does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma or other parts of the British Empire. We are pledged by the Declaration of August, 1940, to help India to obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject, of course, to the fulfilment of obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests. Burma also is covered by our considered policy of establishing Burmese self-government and by the measures already in progress. At the Atlantic meeting, we had in mind, primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the States and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke, and the principles governing any alterations in the territorial boundaries which may have to be made. So that is quite a separate prob-

lem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown. We have made declarations on these matters which are complete in themselves, free from ambiguity and related to the conditions and circumstances of the territories and peoples affected. They will be found to be entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the Joint Declaration.

## SOVIET-GERMAN PROTOCOLS

**D**URING THE COURSE of the Nuremberg trials in March 1946 two secret protocols concluded between the Soviet Union and Germany in 1939 and concerning Poland were disclosed.

*As this volume was in the hands of the printers at that time these protocols could not be given in the regular text.*

### SECRET AGREEMENT ACCOMPANYING THE SOVIET- GERMAN PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION, Signed AUGUST 23, 1939\*

“On the occasion of the signing of the Pact of Non-Aggression between the German Reich and the Soviet Union the undersigned plenipotentiaries of both parties have, in a strictly confidential exchange of opinion, examined the matter of a common boundary of the spheres of interest of the two parties concerned. This exchange of opinion has led to the following conclusions:

1. In the event of territorial-political changes in the area of the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall automatically become the boundary of the German and Soviet spheres of interest, both parties recognizing Lithuania's claim to the Wilno region.
2. In the event of territorial-political changes in territories belonging to the Polish State, the spheres of interest of Germany and the Soviet Union shall be divided by a line following the Narew, Vistula, and San Rivers.

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See No. 43, p. 151.



The question of the desirability, from the standpoint of interest of Germany and the Soviet Union, of maintaining an independent Polish State will be **decided during** the further development of political events. In any case the two Governments will decide the question by way of a friendly agreement.

3. As for Southeastern Europe, Russia stresses its interest in Bessarabia and Germany declares its complete disinterest in that territory.
4. This protocol shall be regarded by both parties as strictly secret.

Signed:

For the German Government — J.J. Ribbentrop  
As plenipotentiary for the Government of the  
USSR — V.V. Molotov."

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

*Attached to this secret protocol were more than a dozen maps of Poland and the Baltic countries with the lines of demarcation of German and Soviet future spheres of interest accurately drawn.*

ADDITIONAL SECRET PROTOCOL, ATTACHED TO THE  
PACT CONCERNING FRONTIERS AND FRIENDSHIP  
SIGNED IN MOSCOW BY GERMANY AND THE SOVIET  
UNION, SEPTEMBER 28, 1939\*

The undersigned plenipotentiaries declare the agreement of the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Soviet Union with regard to the following:

"The secret protocol to the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression signed on August 23, 1939, has been changed in its first point to the effect that the territory of

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\* See No. 57, p. 294.

the Lithuanian State will fall within the Soviet Union's sphere of interest, while the province of Lublin and part of the province of Warsaw will fall within the sphere of interest of the German Reich (see map accompanying the act of Frontiers and Friendship signed today).

At the time when the Soviet Government will take steps to establish its interests on Lithuanian territory, the present German-Lithuanian boundary shall be rectified so that Lithuanian territory lying to the south and southwest of the line indicated on the attached map will fall to Germany."

*This secret protocol goes on to state that existing economic agreements between Germany and Lithuania will not suffer as a result of the acts of the Soviet Union referred to above.*

*This second secret protocol was also signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov.*



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